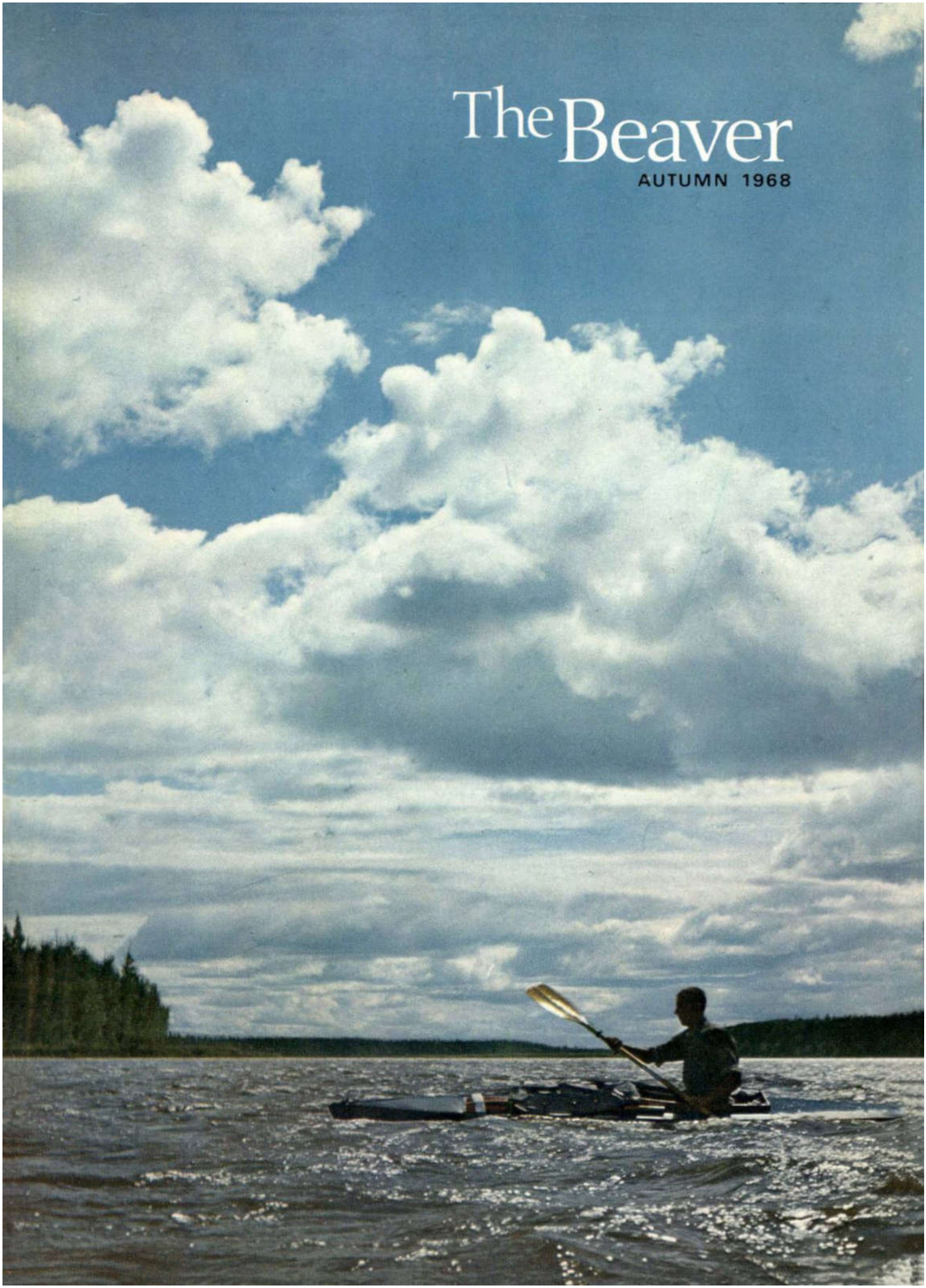
# The Beaver

AUTUMN 1968



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Here are the Eskimo syllabics for "Birds in Flight"—the title of this charming woodcut done by Alice Otokiak, a 12-year-old girl at Cambridge Bay, N.W.T.

One of many talented Eskimo children growing up today in the new North, she will know a better life than her ancestors did as they faced the challenge of existence on the high rim of our continent.

The Hudson's Bay Company is proud of its long association with these people of the Arctic. As new opportunities open to the Eskimo, we share, with all Canadians, a sense of gratification and hope for their future.

Hudson's Bay Company.

INCORPORATED 2ND MAY 1670

# The Beaver

## MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH

*Editor: Malvina Bolus*

AUTUMN 1968
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## CONTENTS

**COVER**
The lovely, empty wilderness where the traveller by canoe or kayak can still enjoy the illusion of solitude. Photo by Egon Bork

4 **A CERTAIN KIND OF MAN**
Sigurd F. Olson

16 **BLAIR FRASER**

18 **CHALLENGE OF THE WILDERNESS**
Jack E. Matthews

24 **A PAINTING TOOL**
Alika Podolinsky Webber

27 **THE WRECK OF THE ELDORADO**
L. F. S. Upton

32 **FLYING SQUIRREL**
Leonard Lee Rue

34 **FRONTIERSMEN OF FORT ELLICE**
James McCook

40 **SOME ORCHIDS OF THE NORTH**
Peggy Young

44 **DANCE OF THE ANCIENT ONES**
John J. Honigmann

48 **ON THE BARREN GROUNDS 1934**
W. Gillies Ross

54 **CHARMAINE**
R. J. Brunt

56 **NORTHERN BOOKS**

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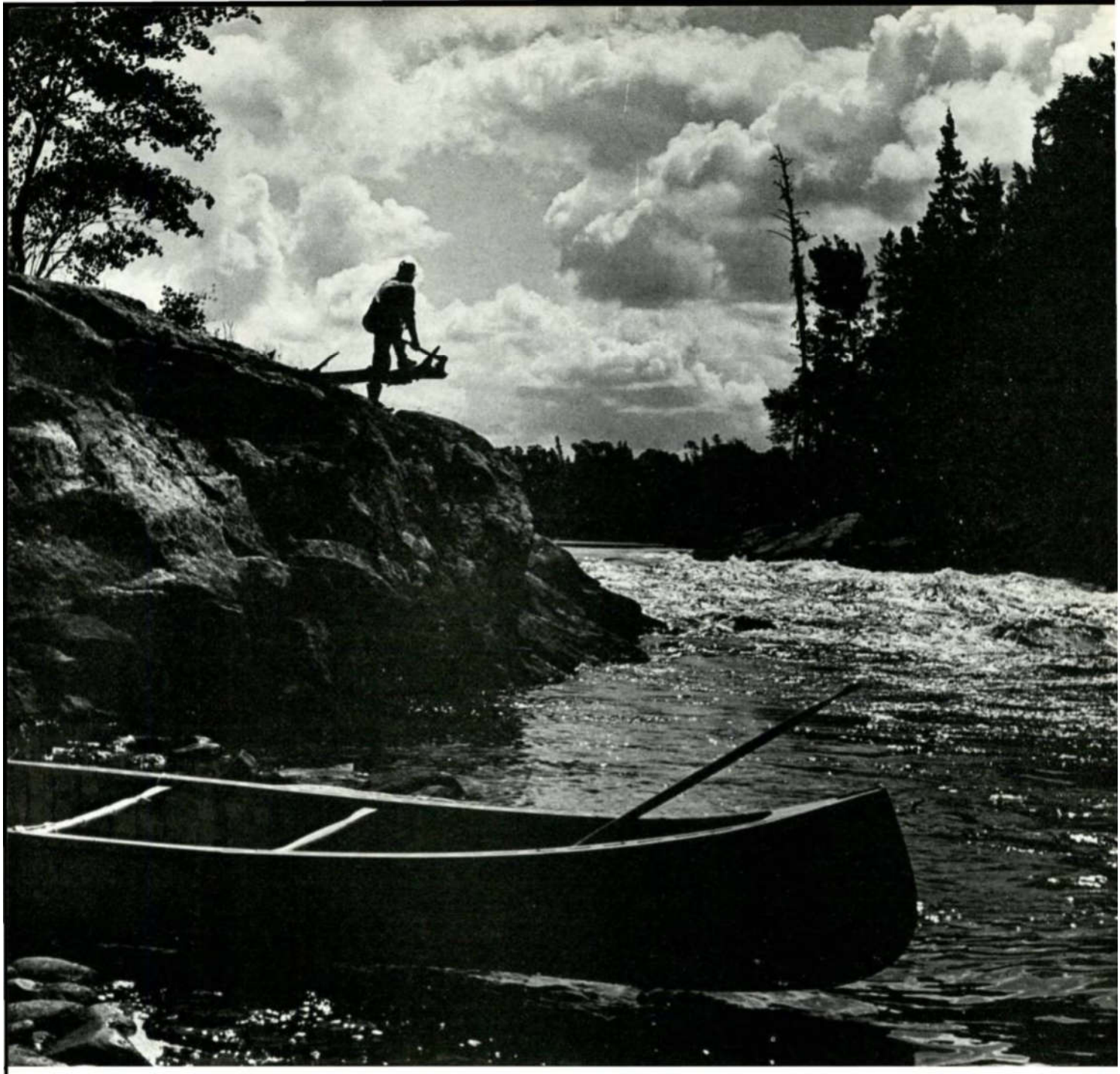


*The kind of men about whom this article is written have become known through the press as "Les Voyageurs" which is not a title they themselves accept, being, as one of them describes it, "an unorganized group of like-minded characters" and not in any sense a club. However their exploits cannot fail to bring to mind the voyageurs of old, in whose wake they paddle, and they call Sigurd F. Olson, the author of this article, The Bourgeois, as the fur-trade voyageurs called the proprietor who accompanied the canoe parties. Blair Fraser pointed out that the term was not historically accurate as the Bourgeois of old did no work en route whereas their Bourgeois, a woodsman since his youth and the most valuable member of the party, who made all the decisions, also did more work than anyone else, including the cooking. So if they are sometimes called the modern voyageurs, it is because the term is fitting, in spite of themselves.*

*Sigurd F. Olson, author and ecologist, is Consultant to the United States Secretary of the Interior and Director of National Park Service. He is also President of The Wilderness Society, and Consultant to the Izaak Walton League of America.*

# A CERTAIN KIND OF MAN

BY SIGURD F. OLSON

SUNDAY THE 12TH OF MAY was a typical spring morning in the north, a world of freshness and beauty, hills brushed with the first nile green of aspen and birch, willows budding along the banks, dogwood stems flaming in the low places. The Petawawa River, a major tributary of the Ottawa along the border of Algonquin Provincial Park, was in full flood.

After a long cold winter the urge to get back on the water had been irresistible to a group of Canadians who for nearly twenty years had made many canoe trips together. Beginning at a dinner party when Eric Morse and Omond Solandt had challenged several foreign diplomats to take a canoe trip to see what Canada was really like, the years following involved many short canoe trips in the area of the Ottawa and the Gatineau, with longer expeditions into the Quetico region, the northern parts of the provinces and the Northwest Territories.

The purpose of the tightly knit group of eight men was not only to follow the old routes of the fur trade and exploration but to get the meaning and flavour of the back country. Each man had his own personal values and reasons for going, but the love of the wilderness and of canoeing was the binding force that held them together. There were Blair Fraser, Omond Solandt, Eric Morse, Denis Coolican, Elliot Rodger and Tony Lovink. Tyler Thompson and I were from the United States. From time to time several others joined the group as replacements when some member of the original eight could not go along. They included Frank Delaute, John Rockingham, Harry Fast, and John Endemann.

And now four of them were on the Petawawa again with the rivers and lakes free of ice once more. Elliot Rodger and Blair Fraser were in one canoe, Omond Solandt and Denis Coolican in another. They had all run the river before and looked forward with excitement to Rollway Rapids ahead, a dangerous half mile stretch of white water, spouting rocks and spume. Rollway was a place where in the old days logs had been rolled down the banks to be carried by high water to the larger Ottawa and from there to the mills below.

Omond and Denis in the lead approached warily, then as the current quickened, worked their way through the swirls into the portage beyond the riffles. Blair and Elliot negotiated the riffles after them and further to the left. Experienced canoemen with many trips behind them and veterans of the big waters of the north, they approached the rapid with confidence. Elliot in the bow, Blair in the stern, each complemented the moves of the other. Here was the pattern they had known many times in the past—the glassy surface of an eddy and a quick turn into the portage just above the main rapids.

One can only guess at what unknown factors caused them to leave until too late that turn out of the current —the spring run-off with the higher than usual water-level, the shifting river bed paved with boulders, the deception of the current unruffled by wind, or some other distraction at the critical moment. Whatever the reason they found themselves drawn past the point of no return around the curve into the throat of the main rapid.

Their canoe quickly swamped in the maelstrom of waves and Blair and Elliot found themselves tumbling helplessly down the cold waters of the half-mile of rapids. Near the end of the rapid Elliot caught a brief glimpse of Blair's indomitable face with his chin up and felt a surge of relief that he too was making it. A second or two later there was a shout, apparently when Blair was hurled head on into a rock. As Elliot was carried into the quiet pool at the foot of the rapid he looked around but saw no sign of Blair. Terk Bayly, who was travelling with Eric Morse in another group, quickly joined Omond and Denis in carrying canoes to the lower part of the rapid and searching the waters there and further down stream. The dreadful truth slowly dawned that Blair was gone. The churning whirlpools of foam laced waters of Rollway Rapids had claimed the life of one who counted among his greatest joys travelling by canoe along the trails of the voyageurs of old.

An editorial the next day in the Ottawa *Journal* spoke for all Canada:

"The death of Blair Fraser is a tragic blow not only to the broad field of journalism and broadcasting but to the dialogue of Canadian affairs at this crucial time. His objective was the pursuit of truth, fairness, and the giving of a better break in life to the underdog and the misunderstood. He was a vigorous fighter; fought sham,

vanity, and deceit, arrogance, and half truth. He loved hard work, hard sport, hard argument, hard principles. He loved the out of doors, youth, literature, laughter, his family and friends. To him politics meant democracy more than partizanship. Whatever he discussed in *Maclean's* Magazine or on TV it was his line to find the facts and to convey them regardless of party politics or popular convention. His friends today are lonely; his colleagues face a challenge. We have all lost a great Canadian."

Editor Borden Spears of *Maclean's* said, "Blair Fraser was one of the greatest journalists Canada has produced."

Many news stories listed his honours. Ottawa Editor of *Maclean's* since 1943; in 1951 and again in 1961 the President's Medal from the Governor General's Award Board for the best articles written by a Canadian anywhere in the world. Editor of *Maclean's* 1960, Overseas Editor 1961-2. Widely known for his thoughtful radio and television talks. World traveller, China, the mid and near East, India, Africa, Europe, Australia; he had been everywhere. Last year came his long awaited book, *The Search for Identity* summing up his convictions and featuring a candid analysis of the events that shaped Canada's post-war emergence as a middle power.

To the group of men with whom he had travelled the Canadian bush, he brought a sense of adventure and zest. When he was along on a trip nothing was ever commonplace for he brought a rare perspective as to the meaning and significance of the Canadian Shield that came from his travels all over the world. And now at the age of 59 he was gone, with the Ottawa, the Gatineau, the Quetico, the Churchill, the Athabasca, Great Slave and Great Bear country, the Hudson Bay routes and at last the Petawawa behind him.

It was during the winter of 1951 that Eric Morse wrote me saying he and several other Canadians were thinking of a canoe trip through the Quetico region. Because I knew the area well, I helped work out the route and met them for the first time as they came down the Basswood River. As the two canoes paddled out of the dusk at our planned meeting place, I had no idea how this rendezvous would involve me in the years to come. In this group were Omond Solandt, Eric Morse, Tony Lovink, and Elliot Rodger. That night we were guests of an old friend, Frank Hubachek, at his lodge on Basswood Lake and there I came to know these companions of the waterways, amateur voyageurs. Before they left to continue their cruise, they invited me to join them on a trip through the Quetico the following year.

This time they started on Basswood Lake instead of Atikokan with the intention of exploring the interior of

*The divide on the Grand Portage trail.*

*Pushing up the Pigeon River.*

Hunter's Island from Lake Kahshahpiwi to the Kawnipi-Chatterton-Russell Lake chain on the way to the historic Maligne River known in the 1870s as the Dawson route to the Riel insurrection near Winnipeg, from there into Lac la Croix and then back along the international border to Basswood. The original four were along, I to paddle a third canoe alone until a Lands and Forests plane dropped in with Blair Fraser.

As we paddled across Yum Yum Lake on the way to the rocky Kahshahpiwi Portage we heard the drone. The plane landed, taxied toward us and stopped. I pushed my canoe up to the near pontoon and took on my passenger with his pack, a tall ruggedly lean chap with a big smile. He stepped from the pontoon into the bow as casually as though flying in from Cairo, Moscow, or Hong Kong to the Quetico wilderness was nothing unusual, something anyone might do. Immediately we were friends and I sensed at once that he would fit into our expedition and add something very important to it. The trip was a happy one as we explored many lakes seldom visited by canoeists.

Blair confessed that he had never taken a big fish and I shall never forget his joy when he hooked a big pike just below Split Rock Falls. We had stopped for lunch to enjoy the scene and to rest and it was while we were eating that he took his rod, made a cast and was fast to a monster, a pike of possibly twenty pounds. He played it for half an hour, coached by all of us. Then just as he was preparing to land it on a smooth ledge, the fish hurled itself into the air and with a great splash broke the leader and was gone. Blair stood there stunned, the biggest fish of his life gone forever.

"That's that," he said grimly, "someday I'll match him." Then the big smile as we loaded up and continued the portage. We had wonderful pickerel fishing below Chatterton Falls and on Metacryst and Blair caught his share but nothing to compare with the one he had lost.

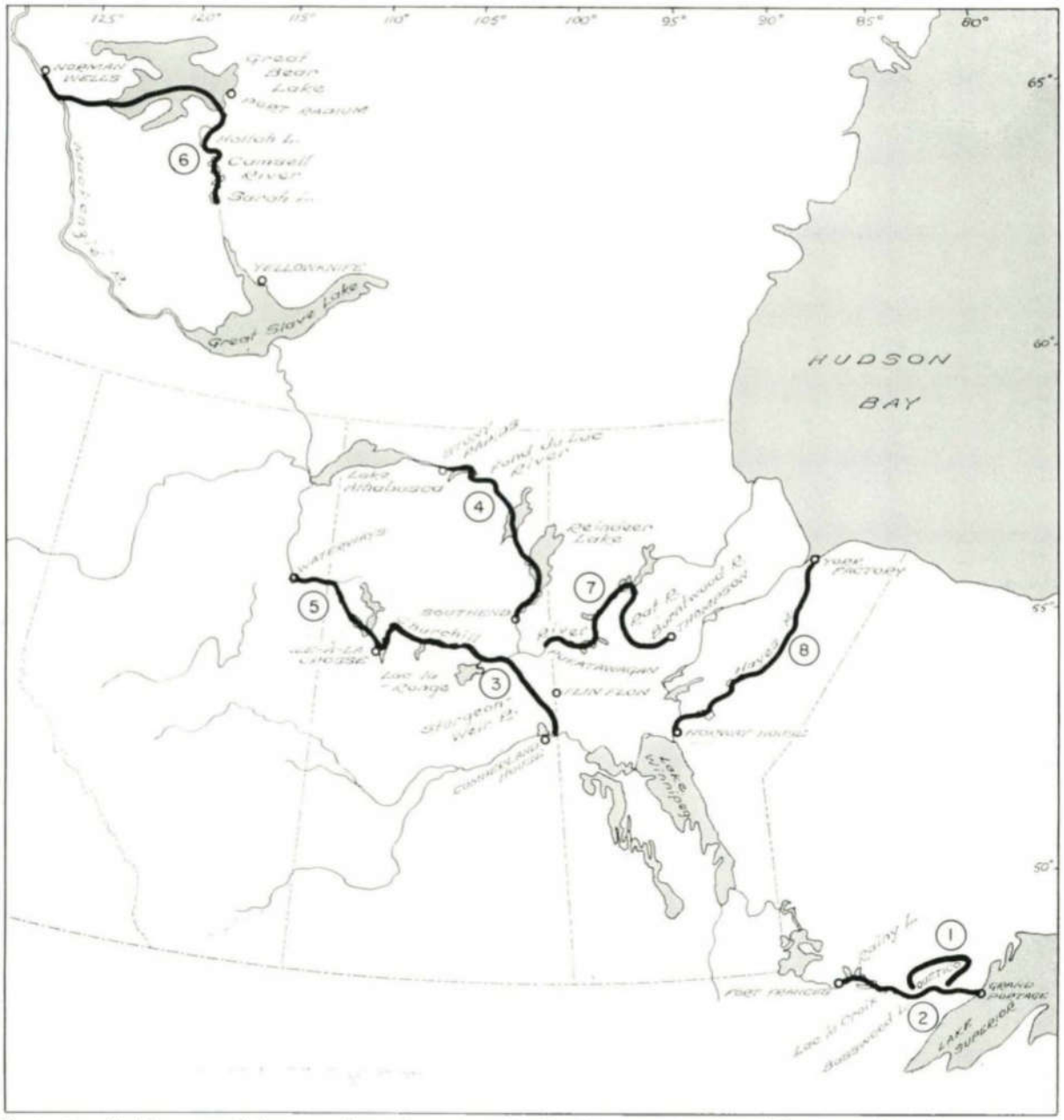
It was at the end of this trip that we got the idea of retracing La Vérendrye's route of 1731 from Grand Portage on Lake Superior to Rainy Lake a distance close to 300 miles. We were all driving back toward Ottawa between Duluth and Fort William when we crossed a marker where U. S. Highway 61 crosses the famous nine mile portage around the rapids of the Pigeon River. The trail was wide and grass grown, but the inscription intrigued us: that across it came fortunes in fur and trade goods from Montreal fifteen hundred miles east and from such distant points as Fort Chipewyan at the western end of Lake Athabasca, this the mid point of a 3,000 miles trail, the gateway to the far Northwest.

*Tony Lorink and Blair Fraser concentrate.*

As we stood there, all had the same thought. Why not come out another summer, camp on Lake Superior outside the old stockade of Grand Portage post, carry the nine mile trail and follow the famous Voyageur's Highway to Rainy Lake as the voyageurs had done two centuries before. Following this route of the Minnesota—Ontario border would give us a real feeling of the ancient trail traders and explorers had followed in their search for the Western Sea, the colour and romance of an era almost forgotten.

That winter we steeped ourselves in Canadian history, read the journals of Vérendrye, Alexander and Roderick Mackenzie, David Thompson, and the Alexander Henrys. We pored over the diaries of Daniel Harmon, Dr John Bigsby, George Simpson and many others. Eric Morse, the historian of the group, copied out passages from records that referred specifically to the route we would follow, bound them together so we could carry them along and read extracts each night.

The day finally came when we pitched our tents on the shore of Lake Superior and when the haze from our




*Routes travelled by some of the group in various years: (1) Quetico, 1953; (2) Grand Portage to Fort Frances, 1954; (3) Ile-à-la-Crosse to Cumberland House, 1955; (4) Southend to Stony Rapids, 1957; (5) Ile-à-la-Crosse to Waterways, 1958; (6) Sarah Lake to Norman Wells, 1959; (7) Pukatawagan to Thompson, 1961; (8) Norway House to York Factory, 1964.*

*Leaving Lake Superior on the Grand Portage.*

camp fire drifted along the beach, it seemed to join with the smoke of long forgotten fires and lay like a wraith over birch-bark canoes, wigwams, and tents along the shore.

Here the voyageurs from Montreal met those from the interior, this the fabled passage way to the unknown frontiers of the new world. Each spring at the breakup of the ice on the St Lawrence, great brigades of huge canoes left Montreal for the west, hundreds of gay and colourful craft fashioned from birch-bark, cedar, and spruce, the thirty-five foot Montreals with a crew of fourteen, the Bastards with a crew of ten. From the west with furs came the twenty-five foot North canoes with a crew of six or eight for the smaller inland waters above Grand Portage. Decorated in gaudy designs, each brigade with its own insignia, vermilion-tipped paddles moving in rhythm to the chansons of Old France, here was a pageant such as the New World had never seen and would not know again.

Thousands of men were in the trade from the early sixteen hundreds until 1850. The routes they travelled were as familiar to them as our highways are to us and nothing was thought of leaving Montreal or Hudson Bay for such distant points as Grand Portage, Cumberland House on the Saskatchewan, Rocky Mountain House, or Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca thousands of miles away.

For a century the French were in control but after 1760 and the conquest of Canada by the British, the Fleur-de-lis was seen no more in the far country. The last century of the trade was a time of fierce competition and the various companies fought bitterly for fur. While the voyageurs sang as they paddled their canoes, they also fought pitched battles with their enemies, ambushed rivals and took their supplies and fur. Nothing was thought of piracy or of debauching the Indians with rum to make them more amenable to trade. There was bloodshed on lakes, portages, and campsites for the region was a law unto itself. The gathering of fur was a deadly and serious business to everyone except the voyageurs themselves.

With the absorption of the North West Company and other rivals by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821, competition came to an end. While the Company of Adventurers still has far-flung outposts scattered throughout the north and northwest, the old days are gone forever. All that is left are crumbling forts, the old foundations, and the names the voyageurs left behind them, Grand Marais, Lac des Mille lacs, Lac la Croix, Ne-parle-pas Rapids; but there is something that will never be lost, the voyageur as a symbol of a way of life, the gay spirit with which he travelled and a love of the wilderness which practically depopulated the struggling pioneer settlements along the St Lawrence during the heyday of the trade. I wonder when the final impact of the era is weighed if the voyageur himself will not be remembered longer than anything else. He left a heritage that will fire imaginations for centuries to come.

When we broke camp the following morning and toiled up the Grand Portage to the top of the first plateau it seemed the voyageurs moved beside us. When we stopped as they had done and looked back at the sparkling blue expanses of Lake Superior we saw it through their eyes. The scene had changed little in three hundred years, Gagnon's Island like a watchdog off the entrance to the bay, Hat Point with its gnarled old Witches Tree waiting as usual for the brigades to come by, in the distance the shadowy outline of Isle Royale.

We struggled through bogs and muskegs the voyageurs knew, fought our way over hills and ledges, suffered from black flies and mosquitoes, made the traditional posés or rests after each half mile and looked forward to the moment when we would glimpse blue water again, drop our loads and take to the canoes once more.

When we finally reached the ruins of Fort Charlotte at the end of the long portage, while there were no shouts of welcome at the landing, the voyageurs were there and all along the route Vérendrye blazed was a growing consciousness of them so compelling, we knew this was just the beginning, that sooner or later we must follow them into the far Northwest.

When Blair Fraser returned to Ottawa, he wrote of the country he had seen and the sense of the past it gave him.

"Not that this was a remarkable section, in the fur-trading days, of the great canoe route which began at Montreal and which Mackenzie and Simon Fraser finally extended all the way to the Pacific. What makes it remarkable now," he said in *Maclean's* Magazine, "a precious legacy that Canada and the United States are both trying to preserve intact, is the fact that this little stretch alone of all the fur-trade highway, is still much as it was when Sir Alexander Mackenzie crossed it in his search for the western sea.

"This," he wrote, " is the wilderness, empty and lovely. Some stretches along these lakes and streams have never been logged; the pines that look down on the traveller today had already taken root when Pierre de la Vérendrye's men went through in the autumn of 1731. Here as nowhere else men of the twentieth century can feel the charm and some of the challenge the makers of Canada knew.

*At Frog Portage the party passes the camp of Harry Moody, local expert on archaeology and Indian lore.*

"That is what the six of us went out to find and we found it. Through the virgin wilderness of Quetico Provincial Park we were able to cling to that sense of a living past. Finally, on the last nine miles of Rainy Lake's forty-mile sweep, we met one of the commonest hazards of the voyageurs, a big wind on a big lake. We rounded the point of a sheltering island and we found ourselves in what must have been a 30-mile gale.

"How the laden birch canoes of old made out in such weather, we couldn't understand. Early chronicles note that with 3,000 pounds and a crew of six or eight in a canoe the gunwales sank within inches of the water. Our aluminum canoes were carrying no more than 500 pounds including our own weight, and they rode the three-foot rollers beautifully. But even they took water two or three times, and at every wave the bow man was drenched. The six of us looked and felt like drowned rats when we finally got to Fort Frances. It took us four hours to paddle the nine miles."

It was then I saw Blair as he was, glorying in physical combat against the elements and the joy that was in his soul when through sheer refusal to accept defeat he came through. As he stood leaning on his paddle looking back over the storm tossed water we had crossed, someone from the welcoming committee came up. "Didn't think you'd make it," said the reporter. "Most everyone gave up and went home."

Blair looked at him with surprise. "This is the way we like to wind up a trip," he said, "in a burst of spray and excitement."

I thought of that many times when the going was rough on other trips and it seemed the tougher things were the happier and more exuberant he became. He made a good voyageur.

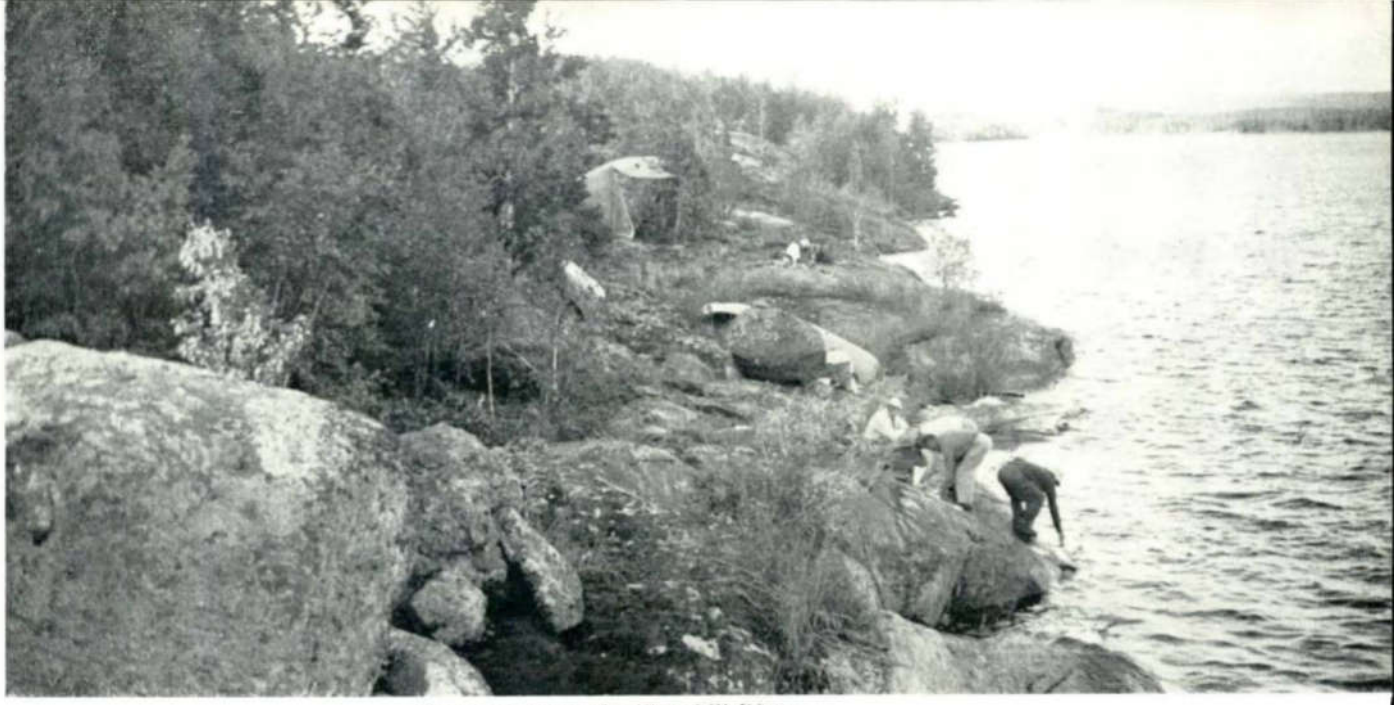
When we said goodbye, he expressed our thoughts when he said, "Next time, let's plan on one of the major routes beyond Lake of the Woods and Lake Winnipeg. We've just started on the route to Athabasca. Until we do the rest of it, we won't know what the *pays d'en haut* was really like."

We began at once to plan the expedition and that winter met in Ottawa. As we sat round a table spread with maps, pictures, and diaries and talked of the Churchill, Athabasca, Great Slave and Great Bear, the Mackenzie, the Thelon, and the Coppermine, this vast nebulous land became real to us and its names to have meaning. None had forgotten the Grand Portage trip of the summer before and how during every mile of it, the men of the old brigades had been with us.

These indomitable little canoe men who could paddle from dawn to dusk, eighteen to twenty hours a day, pack loads of 180 pounds or more and exist on a diet of lyed corn or peas with little fat, faced storms, wild uncharted rivers, hostile Indians and ruthless rivals with a joy and pride in their calling that has possibly never been equalled in man's conquest of any new land.

Somewhere in northwestern Saskatchewan, near the height of land between the waters flowing north into the Arctic and those flowing east to Hudson Bay, would be our starting point. We would travel down stream as though we had wintered there, beginning at the historic old post of Ile-à-la-Crosse close to the headwaters of the Churchill River, follow it east for some five-hundred miles and then southeast to Flin Flon and Cumberland House, a major highway of the era.

It was the way the Athabasca brigades had come for the great rendezvous at Grand Portage. Nowhere in the Northwest was there a route that had seen more of the



*Camp set up on the Churchill River.*

life of that period. Every portage, every campsite, every mile of that great waterway of rivers and lakes was steeped in the annals of trade and exploration. It is a difficult thing to recapture the sense of any time that is gone unless you can still see the old terrain and live in the same primitive way as those who saw it first. Only in regions of great unbroken distances away from towns or roads can this be done.

Blair summed it up after our meeting in Ottawa when he said, "If any country can qualify, it is the Churchill. There is still distance and sweep, and travel is still by canoe."

We had no idea of emulating the voyageurs any more on the Churchill than we had in the Quetico and knew our limitations but we would paddle the same lakes, run the same rapids, and pack over the same portages. We would know the same winds and storms, see the same horizons and because it was our first expedition into the far Northwest, we might feel some of the awe and wonderment and even fear and delight at the enormous expanses and the grandeur of a new land.

There would be no heroics in our travels and we would take no chances believing that desperate adventures were usually the result of foolhardiness. Many of the portages would be long and difficult and at times the rapids and expanses of open water dangerous. We would be cold, wet, and weary but this was the price we expected to pay. To those who have never crossed the hinterlands by canoe, such an expedition might seem formidable but to old timers in the bush or to the voyageurs of the past it was merely routine.

Blair Fraser did not go on this first expedition. At the last moment, he was assigned to some place on the other side of the world. But there were others, the Lower

*The end of a portage on the Churchill.*

*Running a riffle.*

Churchill, the Camsell north of Great Slave to Great Bear and the Mackenzie, and the Nelson-Hayes from Norway House beyond Lake Winnipeg to Hudson Bay. The Camsell, outlined for us by Dr Charles Camsell, after whom it was named, was one of the best.

"It will be cold," Camsell warned before we left, "and those lakes and rivers are an awful tangle. Got lost in there for a while myself."

But this made the trip all the more intriguing and we took off with his blessing, found he was right, the wind constantly out of the north with the sting of the great ice off the Arctic Coast and rain often laced with sleet.

I remember one day particularly when we were fighting heavy winds on Hottah Lake. It was so bitterly cold, no matter how hard we paddled we could not keep warm. Elliot as usual was paddling with Blair and I shall never forget Blair's singing. The rougher it got, the louder he sang. Sometimes I could not hear him over the crash of the waves and the howling of the wind but every so often a strain would come through. He loved the old sea shanties no doubt because in them was action, fighting the storms, and the longing for home of the men in wooden ships before the age of steel. The one he sang was *Spanish Gal* and all I can remember were the first two lines, "Once I had a Spanish Gal—And boys she was a daisy," but I shall never hear a strain of that old ballad again without thinking of Blair that day near Great Bear Lake when ice formed on our paddles and a gale was in our teeth.

When we finally reached Port Radium at the eastern end of the big lake, Blair and I made the most wonderful and priceless acquisition of our lives, two beautiful suits of long woollen underwear.

"Let her blow" said Blair as we left Eldorado. "From now on it's summer."

A newpaper man at Edmonton on the way out, asked us why we did it. "Most people," Blair replied, "might think we are touched, but if you work on a job where tension is the only cause of fatigue, you can't really relax anywhere because your troubles stay with you. But if you're paddling down some river toward dusk looking for a place to camp after a long day of rapids, portages, and fighting the wind, there is no time to worry about anything else and the tension just works out of you.

"Never, even at our coldest and wettest, did any of us for a moment regret having come. What drew us were the things that draw so many men, and a few women, to the north—the challenge, the sense of contact with the historic past and with eternal reality that you find in all of Canada's wilderness.

"We are looking for parts of Canada," he went on, "that look much as they did in the days of the fur trade and it's astonishing how much of the North is still unchanged."

The winter of 1963, he wrote me from London. "What about 1964? Omond and Denis say you are thinking of the Hayes River to end at the bay. Hudson Bay at last. Sounds marvellous but I don't really care where we go so long as we go somewhere."

*Above: A typical camp near South Indian Lake with Elliot Rodger preparing a meal.*

*Right: Thawing out on the chilly Camsell River trip.*

*Below: A log on a Mackenzie River beach offers relaxation for (left to right) Harry Fast, Eric Morse, Denis Coolican, Omond Solandt, Elliot Rodger, Blair Fraser, Tyler Thompson.*

And that is the way it always was with Blair. It made no great difference just so he was with the voyageurs somewhere out in the bush covering some historic route over the Shield. His feeling for the bush was actually more important than places or routes.

While still in London, I sent him a news story someone had written calling "The Voyageurs" fictitious characters. He sprang to the defence and replied: "In London, I can well believe we are fictitious—the Churchill, Camsell, the Nelson and the Hayes, Grand Portage and the Quetico do seem to belong to the realm of myth and legend. It is very pleasant here but I long to be back where the Gatineau and the whole Laurentian Shield is within reach. I like big cities, London the best of them all, but after a while I hanker for the smell of the bush."

The Hayes River trip to York Factory on Hudson Bay was the last long expedition he made and I remember vividly every day of it. Again it was cold, with the wind blowing this time from the ice in the great bay. This was the major route of the Hudson's Bay Company from from the Bay to Norway House and to Cumberland House, as important a route to the men who manned the York boats as the Churchill was to those of the North West Company. This was the route of immigration to Fort Garry and the new farming lands of the plains.

There was rough going on the Hayes due to low water. One day I slipped on some smooth round boulders and had a bad fall and for some time it was all I could do to keep going. Struggling across a difficult portage after considerable wading and lining the canoes down an impassable shallow rapid, Blair must have noticed my trouble. He came up and with his free arm steadying me said: "Bourgeois, if you can't walk, we'll carry you," and I know he would have done that for me or anyone else in the group as we would have done for him.

As the years went by I began to see that Blair's feeling for the bush was more than a sense of history, more than travel by canoe, that he was in love with the whole two million square miles of the rugged empty wilderness of the Shield itself. In an article "The Fairy Romance of the Canadian Shield" in *Maclean's*, he told of its fabulous mineral and forest treasures but more importantly perhaps how he felt about it and what it meant to Canada and its culture.

*The good feeling at the end of a voyage to York Factory; the voyageurs photographed at Fort Garry Gate in Winnipeg are (left to right) Elliot Rodger, Blair Fraser, Sigurd Olson, Omond Solandt, Tony Lovink, and Denis Coolican.*

B. BONNER

"The hardiest of fairy tale themes," he wrote, "have always to do with the finding of treasure in the commonplace, the scorned and the rejected. In these classic stories, ugly ducklings turn into swans. . . . Canada's ugly duckling has been the Canadian Shield, a great rugged horseshoe of muskeg, stunted forest, lakes and rivers, and bald grey rock that makes up more than half of the whole dominion.

"For more than three hundred years—eight hundred if you go back to Leif Eriksson's time, the Shield was known as a rocky waste, a barrier to progress and a blight on Canada's future. Eriksson called it Helluland, the land of flat stones, Jacques Cartier reported to King Francis of France that there wasn't a cartload of dirt in the whole of it, and it broke the hearts of gullible settlers who tried to clear and farm it as earlier generations had

done the St Lawrence lowlands . . . . Because the Shield came frowning down so close behind the narrow strip of farmland, because it laid a thousand miles of stony wilderness between settled Ontario and the western plains, the very idea of a Canadian nation struck many a prudent man as a foolish defiance of common sense. Yet it is the Shield more than all the rest of the land put together that has transfigured Canada from a primitive agricultural to a modern industrial economy.

"When we speak of Canada, as a vast treasure chest," he said, "we speak of the Shield where we get 95 per cent of our copper, 84 per cent of our iron, and all our nickel, cobalt, platinum, titanium and uranium, the second largest source in the world.

"Pulp and paper earn more dollars for Canada than minerals, a billion and a quarter all told, five per cent of our gross national product. Three quarters of it comes from the Shield.

"Canada has more fresh water on the Shield than the rest of the world put together, more developed hydro-power and more potential.

"This is new wealth, all of it and as Sir Wilfrid Laurier once said in speaking of it, 'The twentieth Century belongs to Canada'. The treasures of the Shield have been won in the end because a certain kind of man has always been drawn to this harsh grey land. It seems a new and virgin country to the men who love it and mankind has made little imprint upon it, civilization almost none. . . . Almost anywhere on its rough face, even fifty miles more or less from the capital of Canada, it is easy to fancy yourself alone in both space and time.

"No matter how carefully it is searched, we know the Shield is mostly rock. . . . No matter how many rich mines are brought in here and there on its vast surface, the Shield will always be empty. This too is important—more important in some people's eyes than the wealth itself.

"One of the things that make our country what it is, a little different from most other countries however similar or however friendly, is the awareness that the wilderness is not far away. However urban we become, however soft and civilized, we still have the cleansing wild within a hundred miles more or less. It is good to know that no matter how much richer and stronger we may grow, Canada will still be the same kind of country."

This to the companions who have been with him in the bush was Blair Fraser's creed and this was what he was looking for when he went off that last weekend to run the Petawawa. I believe he felt as Charles Camsell who when asked if he had ever known fear on his many wilderness journeys replied "Yes, I've often known fear but fear laced with exhilaration".

Blair knew this exhilaration and lived most keenly when life was laced with danger. I know it was so when his canoe approached the roaring rapids of The Rollway, and deep in his heart I think he went out the way he wanted to with the shouting of white water in his ears and the glisten of it ahead.

He and his devoted voyageur companions had the the privilege of retracing old trails across much of northern Canada, trails followed today by younger men who are catching what he caught, the feeling of wilderness travel, its cleanness, challenge and freedom, its sense of history and identity. The voyageurs will continue their travels over the Shield knowing Blair Fraser would have wanted it no other way. We will miss him for he was part of the Shield and all it meant.

The eulogy read at his funeral in Ottawa on May 18th from his book *The Search for Identity* summed up how he felt. In speaking of the men who had pioneered the North and opened up its treasures, he said:

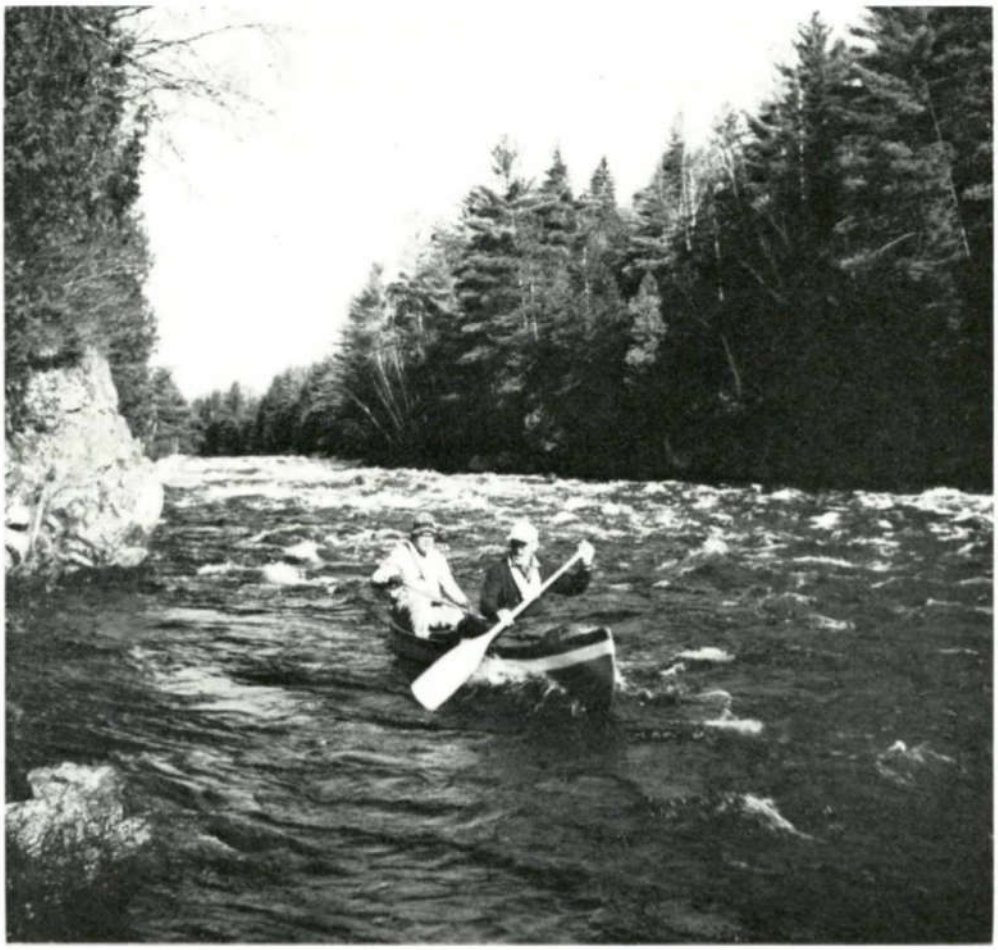
"What held such people together was not love for each other, it was love of the land itself, the vast empty land in which, for more than three centuries, a certain type of man has found himself uniquely at home. . . . It is something that is within reach of every Canadian, urban or rustic—an empty area of forest or plain in which a man can still enjoy the illusion of solitude."

He was indeed that "certain type of man" in his devotion to the North and I believe he had absorbed some of its strength and unyielding hardness, qualities needed in a world questioning verities and convictions.

And so to you Blair at the end of the trail—Cheers. •

*ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS*

Grateful acknowledgment for permission to quote is made to the following: *Maclean's* Magazine, excerpts from Blair Fraser articles; the Ottawa *Journal*; McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, and Alfred A. Knopf, New York, adaptation from introduction to *The Lonely Land* by Sigurd F. Olson; Doubleday & Company, Inc., quotation from *The Search for Identity: Postwar to Present* by Blair Fraser, copyright © 1967 by Blair Fraser. Photographs, except p. 4 Richard Harrington, by the author. Thanks for assistance are also due to Eric Morse and Elliot Rodger.



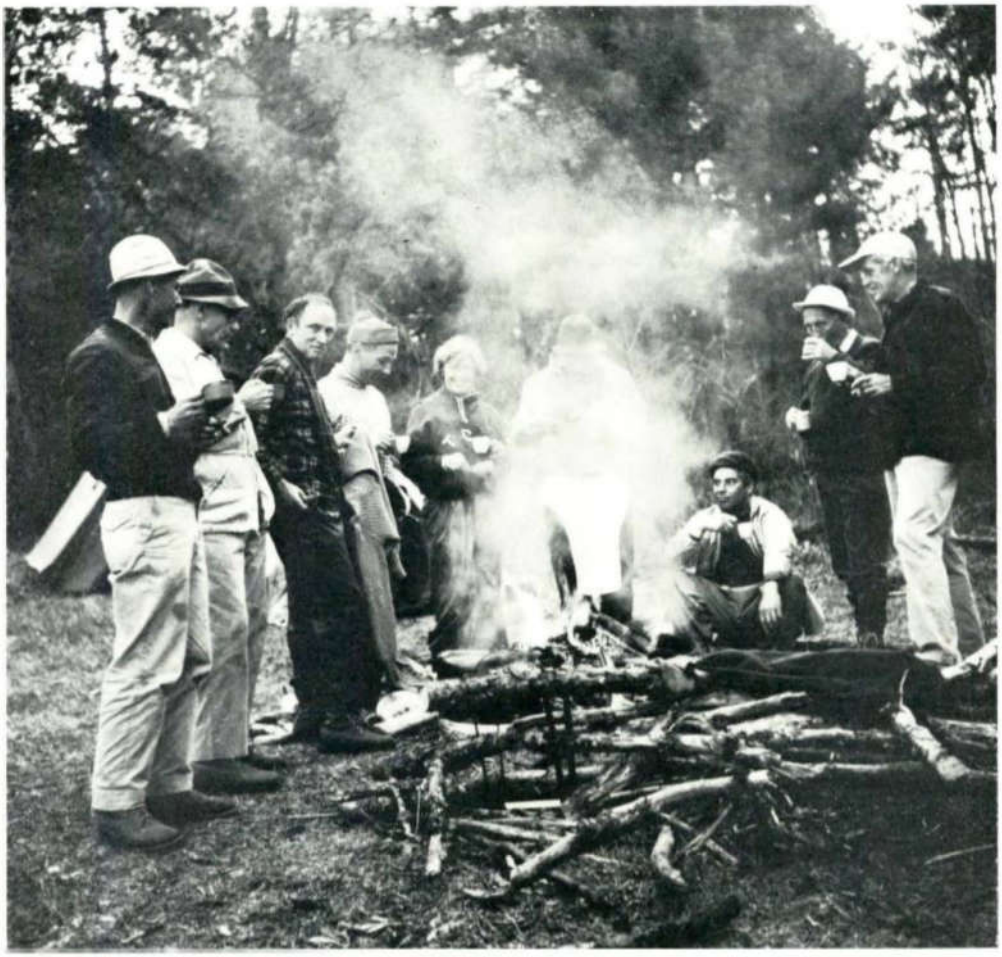
A. R. C. JONES PHOTOS

*On the lower part of Rollway Rapids in spring 1967, Blair Fraser in bow paddling with Dr Omond Solandt.*

# BLAIR FRASER

In the pages of this issue tribute is paid to the memory of a true Canadian known across our land and in many other lands: Blair Fraser. His quiet sincerity, his perceptive and honest writing, his love of the wilderness, had a warm appeal for all who met him or for those who knew him only through broadcasts or the written word. These articles on canoe travel would, we believe, have pleased him and will, we hope, bring to our readers an understanding of the lure of the wilderness country and of the part it plays in the moulding of the Canadian spirit, whether consciously or otherwise.

Among those who value the solitude of open spaces as well as the community of cities and villages and who thinks that travelling by canoe is fun is the Prime Minister, The Rt. Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau. In the spring, when canoe enthusiasts would make runs on the Petawawa, some of them limbering up for longer expeditions, Mr Trudeau, who is a keen paddler, has joined them. He has in fact been on one of the extensive trips organized by Eric Morse when he went down the Coppermine River. Mr Trudeau's comments on hearing of the death of Blair Fraser in May appear on the opposite page.



*Blair Fraser, right, joins Eric Morse's group round their camp fire on the Petawawa last year. The canoeists (l. to r.) are: Jack Goering, Omond Solandt, Pierre Trudeau, G. H. U. 'Terk' Bayly, Pamela Morse, Angus Scott, Jim Bayly, and Eric Morse.*

Over the years I learned to respect Blair's commentary on the political scene. He was a very wise man, always looking to the news of the future—not just the past, although he did that well, too.

He was one of those reporters who analysed the realities of our society long before the general public became aware of them. He had a great sincerity and a depth of analysis which is a model for political reporting.

While canoeing with him, I came to admire not only his skill as a canoeist, but his great generosity.

—Pierre Elliott Trudeau

# Challenge of the Wilderness

BY JACK E. MATTHEWS, *Headmaster of Lakefield College School*

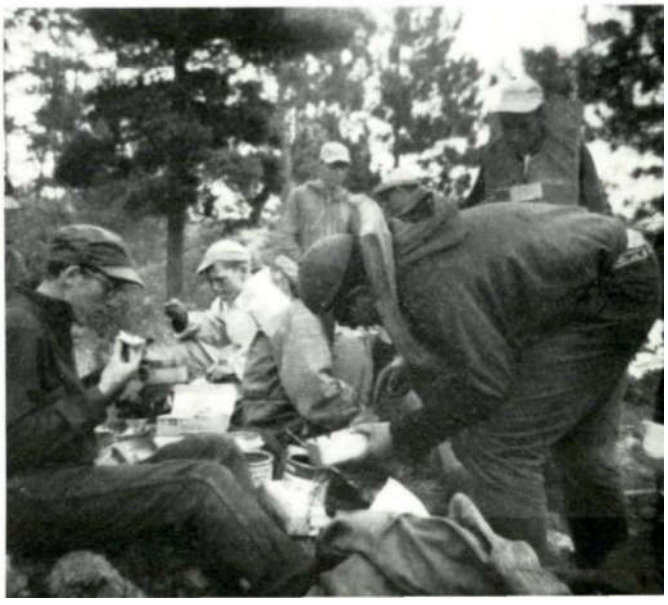
*The tumpline or carrying strap of the early voyageurs comes into use when taking loads over a portage, and the outdoor life develops hearty appetites.*

THIS GIANT LAND of Canada, vast and brooding, varied in its magnificence, was a challenge to our forefathers. The pioneers fought the cold winter, wrestled with the tall stands of oak and pine to clear the fertile soil, enabling them to feed their families.

Never did they look on this huge wilderness as a friendly giant holding unbounded promises for the future. It was a constant threat, and hazards on the rivers and lakes were a continual reminder for restraint upon their foolhardiness. Only a handful of adventurers explored our country. Most of our forefathers huddled along the banks of the St Lawrence or on the shores of the Great Lakes. They had great respect for and fear of the Canadian north. This respect was carefully engendered in their children and into each succeeding generation. Small wonder Canadians with this heritage have populated only the southern five per cent of their country. No wonder few of us have snow-shoed, dog-sledded or paddled over our country.

A small group of modern day adventurers have been helping to destroy this myth about the Canadian north. Under the knowledgeable leadership of their "Bourgeois" Sigurd Olson, seven men have paddled thousands of miles in the Canadian north. Fortunately, Sig is also a delightful author who has chronicled some of their expeditions—perhaps the most read being *The Lonely Land*. This is a true tale of thrilling white-water adventure by canoe down 500 miles of Canada's wild Churchill River, investigating the same rapids, lakes, portages, ancient campsites, and primitive wilderness haunts as the voyageurs of an earlier time.

While sterning for Sig last year I asked him how far he had paddled in his lifetime. Half an hour later he

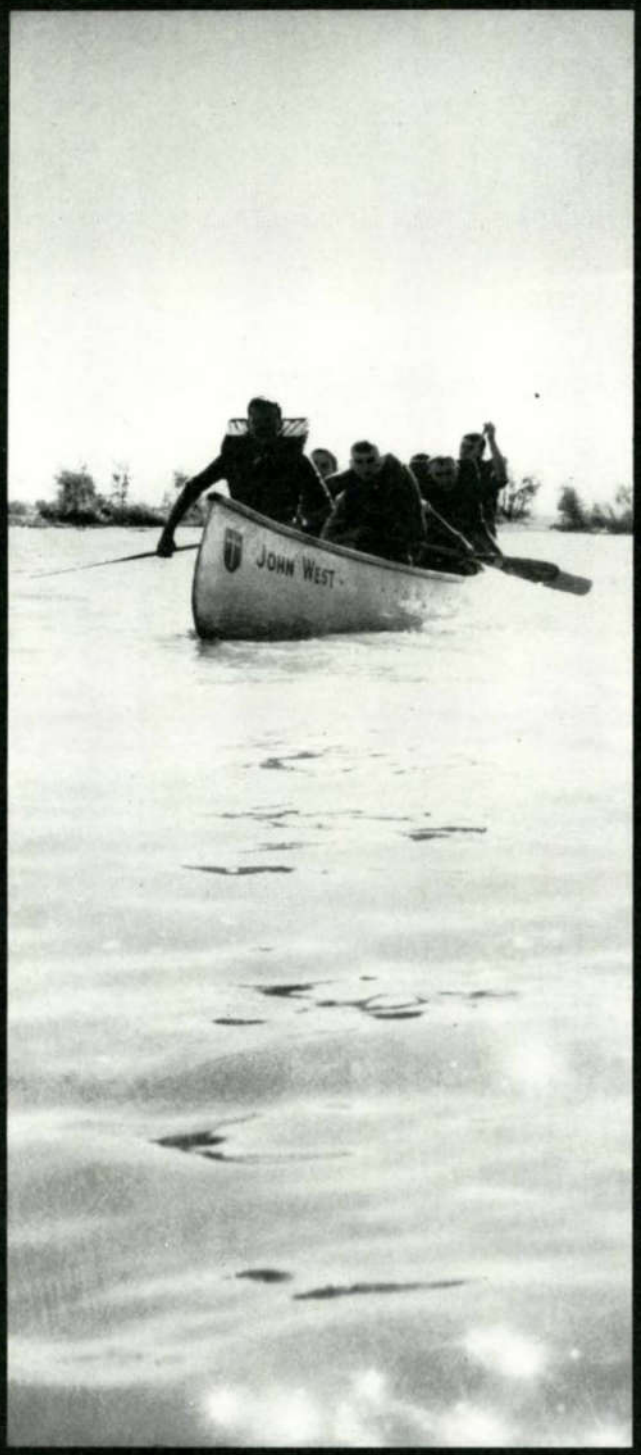


*The boys haul their canoes ashore at a campsite.*

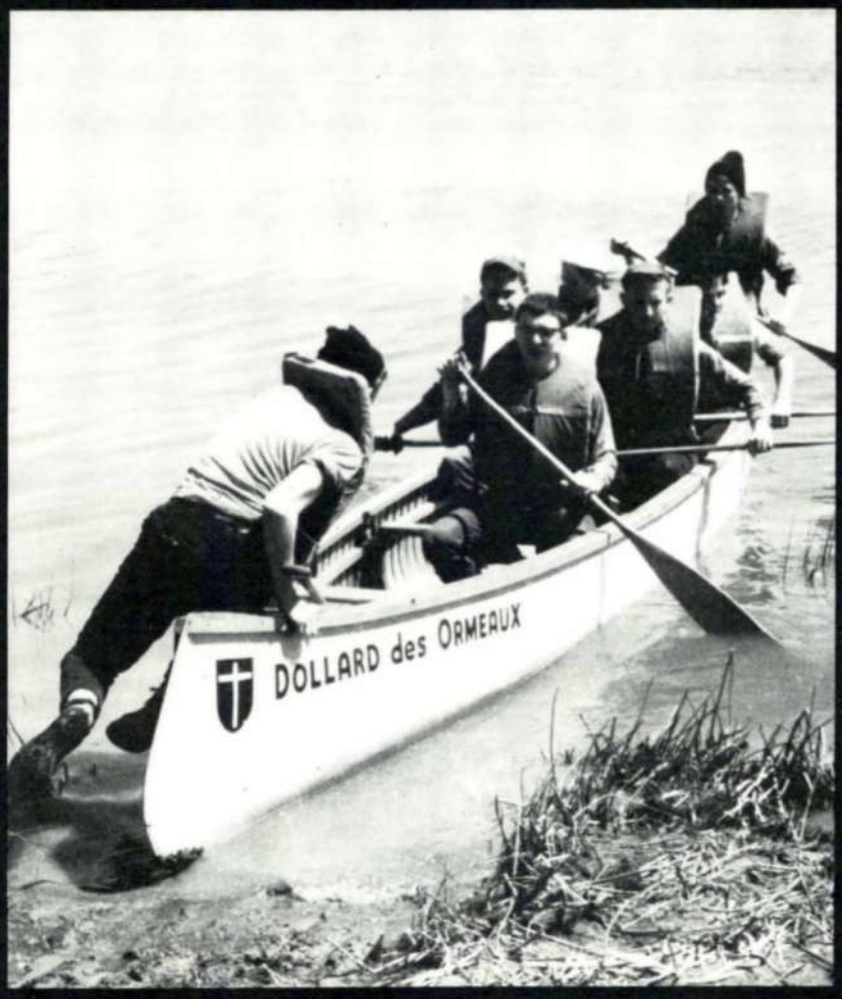
gunwaled his paddle and twisting around on the thwart, he said, "It's hard to believe but it must be between thirty and forty thousand miles!"

Eric Morse, National Director of the Association of Canadian Clubs of Canada, is the master planner of the group. Eric has paddled every route travelled by the original fur trade voyageurs as well as a water route from Hudson Bay across the subarctic Territories. These modern voyageurs also include Dr Omond M. Solandt, Chancellor of the University of Toronto and Chairman of the Science Council of Canada who, being a medical man though not practising, is physician to the party. According to Blair Fraser his bedside manner was far from soothing to the patient, a memorable prescription given on one trip for an infected finger being "just soak it in hot water—dish water will do".

Then there are Dr A. H. J. (Tony) Lovink, retired Netherlands Ambassador to Canada; Denis Coolican, who has been President of the Canadian Bank Note Company, Vice-President of Brazilian Light and Power Company, and now is the Chairman of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton; Major General Elliot Rodger, former Vice Chief of the General Staff of the Canadian Army and now chairman of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission; he is chief assistant to the Bourgeois and always ready to help others; Tyler Thompson, former United States Minister to Canada, later Director General of Foreign Service in




Many travellers on Canada's waterways have received help and encouragement from the group of modern voyageurs who have found in paddling and camping in the quiet places the ideal form of recreation. Inspired by such trips, the boys seen in these photographs were given practical advice, gained from experience, as to supplies and equipment, routes, rapids and portages. Shown are canoeists from St. John's Cathedral Boys School at Selkirk, Manitoba, and Lakefield College School, Ontario, the photographs by courtesy of the respective schools.




AUTUMN 1968

*Resting on the bank during a trip on the Hayes River.*

the State Department; and their lost voyageur Blair Fraser, who was so well known by all Canadians and many others for his journalism and commentaries. His wit fitted in well with the rest of this congenial group. I can remember Blair saying to Eric Morse one time "Eric, you are the most organized and comfortable man in the wilderness I have ever known. You have travelled the voyageur's routes but your hair shirt was tailor made".

As Sig Olson puts it, "All had played vital roles in the affairs of their time. Of middle age or beyond, they faced the hazards of the bush and its vast distances with a spirit and aplomb that would have done credit to men half their age."

These men have shown Canadians that we can enjoy the north. A little training, some careful planning and a rewarding holiday is available on the thousands of rivers and lakes in our north land. Sig Olson's books, Blair Fraser's articles, and the newspaper accounts written by Denis Coolican and their friend, I. Norman Smith in the Ottawa *Journal* about the exciting accomplishments of the group have inspired many schools to have their young people experience the life of the voyageurs. The advice of these experienced paddlers, generously given, has provided helpful guidance and encouragement.

The High School at Atikokan has begun an "Outward Bound Programme" where their students are trained to understand the wilderness and live alone in the woods for days with an absolute minimum of equipment. Brentwood School on Vancouver Island is sending sixteen boys and a master down the Liard River into the Mackenzie and then into Great Slave Lake.

Jack Goring of Trinity College School in Port Hope, Ontario, took some boys 500 miles down the Hanbury and Thelon Rivers to Chesterfield Inlet on Husdon Bay last summer.

The Lakefield College School in Ontario has a fleet of canoes and sailboats which are used for expeditions down the lakes and rivers in the Canadian Shield north of the school. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme is followed at Lakefield which culminates in a three day 50 mile hike through wilderness country.

Would you like your son to paddle a voyageur canoe from Montreal to Winnipeg or from Winnipeg to the Gulf of Mexico? If so, make your application to St John's Cathedral Boy's School near Winnipeg, but your son will have to survive a three hundred mile canoe trip to prove he is acceptable.

As well as schools, there are camps for boys, such as Kandalore in Ontario, run by expert canoe-man Kirk Whipper, where the enjoyment of voyaging and wilderness living are realized. And expeditions have been organized by the Boy Scouts and Y.M.C.A.

This is a small example of the influence these men

have had in our overcoming the inherited fear we have of our vast country. They have led the way and now two of these modern day voyageurs are honorary patrons of a new venture. This is to be in the nature of a residential school where children from any part of Canada will live for a week at a time, year round, and where the classrooms will be thirty thousand acres of wilderness. It is called Buckhorn Wilderness Centre. A thousand acres of country in southern Ontario has been purchased by the sponsors, and the large area of adjoining Crown land will be used. No more fitting tribute to the inspiration given by the group who have been called the modern voyageurs could be written than the following explanation of the aims of the Centre:

"The real wilderness—which in this country as in few others still remains, a vast and overwhelming presence, extending almost unbroken between the two oceans and reaching into the distant north—is where Canada had its beginning. Yet as each succeeding generation of Canadians grows more urbanized, our racial memories of this beginning grow dim. The winding waterways; the surrounding forest; the bitter but impartial lessons of nature; the joy of self-reliance; the calm; the solitudes; the thin, high sound of silence . . . all are lost but to a diminishing number of Canadians. Meanwhile, the growth of cities and towns is tumultuous. The pace of life seems to increase almost daily. The individual is under ever increasing pressure as he faces his life and its problems. He can become confused and can lose his identity. He needs at times to be able to go back to the beginning to find his personality as a North American and in the process to look with new eyes upon his own problems and those of his country.

"But the Canadian wilderness itself is succumbing to the encroachment of roads and highways. The lonely places are disappearing. Without comprehension, hence without heed, the fabric of the wilderness is being torn apart, and the patterns of Nature are being lost. Without intelligent husbandry, even this vast resource will fade away, such is the pace and efficiency of modern mechanization." The plan is to preserve an accessible area of typical Canadian wilderness and to employ this in an intelligent way to develop among Canadians of all ages an appreciation of its values and its lessons as a retreat and as a source of inspiration and understanding.

On behalf of the thousands of true Canadians, present and future, I would like to express a grateful and appreciative thank you to Eric, Sig, Tony, Elliot, Denis, Omond, and especially to Blair Fraser. ◆

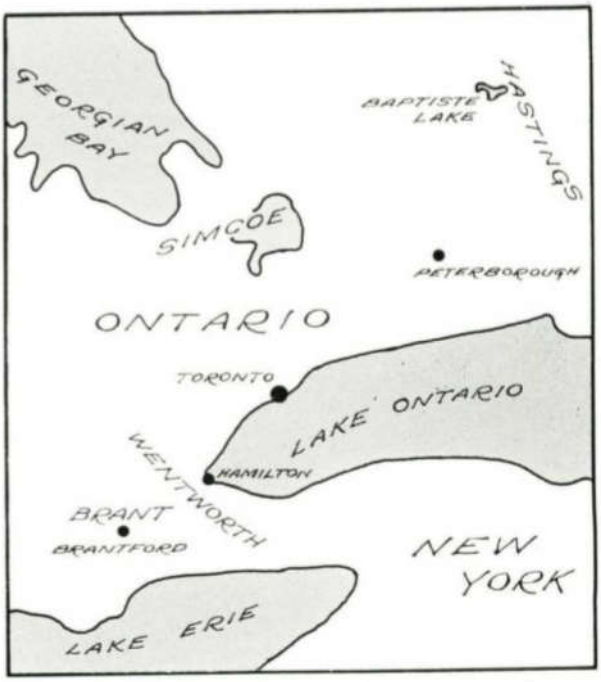
*The flotilla of St John's Cathedral Boys School on the Red River.*

*Fig. 1. Bone line marker, made by the Naskapi of the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula.*

# A PAINTING TOOL

*BY ALIKA PODOLINSKY WEBBER*
*anthropologist who has worked for several seasons among the Naskapi in Labrador.*

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM




*Counties in Ontario where painting tools were found.*

THE ALGONKIAN-SPEAKING Naskapi Indians of the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula painted lines on their skin clothing which are usually interpreted as representing tracks or a road—tracks of game, of a toboggan loaded with meat, or a path leading to caribou. The Indian saw these paths in visions and dreams which were inspired by the supernatural world, and believed that when his wife represented these visions on his clothing in the form of line designs, they became a magic assurance of game.

No one has doubts about this and the most convincing evidence is that the Indian has complete trust in his gods. He does not store food, for this would show distrust of the gods, who would then become angry and in consequence recall the game upon which he depends.

The instrument most often used for line work is a pronged tool of which a good example made by the Naskapi is Figure 1. This tool can draw several parallel lines with one stroke of the hand.

That line designs must be very ancient means of decoration is quite obvious when one looks at the early decorations of Indians throughout the circumpolar zone.

The five bone and antler tools illustrated (Figures 2 to 6) were found in Ontario in the nineteenth century. They were usually regarded as pottery markers and little further notice was taken of them. But in fact these tools —of which some are curved—have never marked a pot. Walter Kenyon of the Royal Ontario Museum is sure that they could not mark a pot and points out that there is not a single design on pottery in the area where such a tool might have been used. Mr Kenyon believes that these are early Indian painting tools. The actual age of the tools is, however, an open question and we cannot even be sure if native or white man's implements were used in making them. The assumption that these instruments were painting tools is strengthened by the fact that similar tools—always curved—are used by the Naskapi Indians and that in the prongs of one of them particles were found, which on closer examination proved to consist of 98 per cent hematite.

The tool found in Brant County (Fig. 2) and deposited with the Royal Ontario Museum around 1870-80 was actually recognized, for the entry states: "Probably used to ornament skins for dresses."

What is so exciting about these tools is that they represent concrete evidence of a painting culture in Ontario. Is is usually taken for granted that a tradition of painting on skin had a wide distribution among the North American Indians and that this tradition remained longest in areas where other mediums of decoration were unavailable such as the plains and the equally treeless

*Naskapi line designs or tracks decorate this beautiful full-skirted skin coat.*

*Fig. 2. Tool found in Brant County.*

*Fig. 3. Double-ended tool from the county of Wentworth.*

*Fig. 4. From the Baptiste Lake site, Hastings County, 1891.*

*Fig. 5. Also from the Baptiste Lake site.*

*Fig. 6. Tool found in Simcoe County.*

*The ruler gives scale only for Figs. 5 and 6.*

north. But that we would be able to find a highly specialized tool for painting in Ontario is a most unexpected bit of luck.

With such a find one may even try to speculate on what might have been. On account of the severe climate in the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula and the terrible plague of mosquitoes and blackflies in the summer I cannot imagine that the Naskapi painted his own skin (except the face and the hands). But in Ontario the Indian may not only have painted his skin clothing but his own body as well and perhaps with a line marker. The painting of his own body may have even influenced the designs.

It is unlikely that we will ever be able to trace Naskapi designs back to the time when they may have evolved on the human body of ancestors to the south, long before the move to their present northern location. But the tools here illustrated reveal the type of painting found popular by the Indian in Ontario. Line designs may have covered the body or the skin clothing of many a hunter in prehistoric times and no doubt these fulfilled a magic purpose and were beautiful. ◆

# THE WRECK OF THE ELDORADO

by L. F. S. Upton

## STRANGE TALE OF SHIPWRECK

### New Liskeard's Visitors from the North

### Travelled to Temiskaming Amid Incredible Hardships

Thus ran the headlines of the Toronto *Globe* on Saturday, 23 October 1903. Stumbling out of the forests as if from nowhere had come a group of almost fifty people, survivors of a shipwreck that no one had even heard about. In an age of instantaneous communication, when the news of London, Vienna and St Petersburg was reported within hours, a group of castaways could wander for weeks in the north country of Ontario without anyone knowing of their existence beyond a few isolated Indians and Hudson's Bay Company officials.

The adventure had begun with a fur trading expedition. Revillon Frères furriers, of Paris, was an old established but expanding concern, which since 1860, had opened stores in London, New York, and Montreal. By 1900 they were ready to enter into direct competition with the Hudson's Bay Company for furs at the source. They planned to establish trading posts at the mouths of all the rivers emptying into Hudson Bay and, in preparation, spent 1902 in setting up five posts along the north shore of the St Lawrence and one at North West River in Labrador; 1903 was to be the year of expansion of no less than five posts in one season.

What followed can only be described as a chapter of accidents. Revillon Frères bought a Norwegian vessel, the *Stord*, which was loaded at Quebec city with trade goods, supplies and prefabricated building material. The *Stord* sailed in July 1903 under the direction of Revillon's Montreal representative, Mons. d'Aigneaux. Agents were sent up the Albany River to hire Eskimo pilots to guide the *Stord* when it arrived at the south end of Hudson Bay. This precaution proved unnecessary, for the *Stord* ran aground at Pointe des Monts even before it got out of the Gulf of St Lawrence.

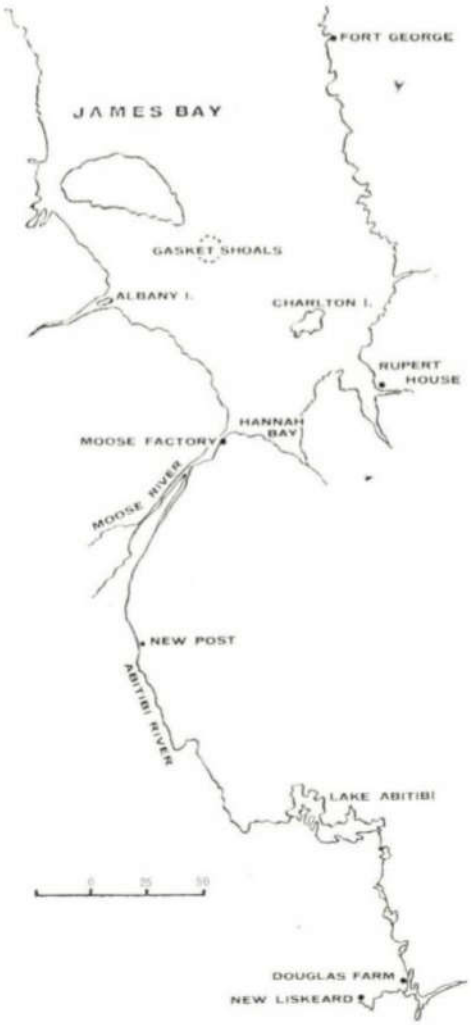
The directors of Revillon Frères were now faced with a difficult decision: either abandon their plans for the season and lose a year's business, or risk getting another boat in and out of Hudson Bay before ice closed down navigation. They chose to take the risk, chartering the *Eldorado*, Captain William Berry, a vessel of 820 tons normally used on the run from London to Liverpool. Nothing daunted by the prospect of abandoning English coastal waters for the rigours of the Hudson Bay route, Captain Berry sailed promptly across the North Atlantic, stopped by the grounded *Stord* to transfer its cargo, then continued to Quebec city to complete loading.

At Quebec, the *Eldorado* took on M. d'Aigneaux, his wife, daughter, and the child's governess; fourteen French-Canadian carpenters, a doctor, and four clerks. There were enough provisions to feed those who would be staffing the new posts for three years and, in addition to the contents of the *Stord*, more sections of prefabricated buildings were loaded as deck cargo. On 15 August, the *Eldorado* set sail with twenty-three passengers and twenty-four crew, her destination Fort George, Rupert's House, Moose Factory, Hannah Bay, and Fort Albany. Drawing sixteen feet and carrying 1450 tons of cargo, she was a larger ship than any the Hudson's Bay Company had yet sent into those northerly waters.

The *Eldorado* successfully navigated the Gulf of St Lawrence and then ran into foul weather. Captain Berry soon abandoned his charts, and confessed to having no idea where he was. He apparently got through Hudson Strait by sheer chance, and when the fogs cleared on Hudson Bay the unaccustomed mirages and false horizons made it almost impossible to get accurate bearings. For much of the time, progress was only possible through soundings, and on the night of 28 August the ship cast anchor as the plumb lines indicated twenty-five feet on one side, four feet on the other. When daylight came, the *Eldorado* was confronted by an island with sheer cliffs; on the port side a huge rock reared above the water and on the starboard waves could be seen breaking over the reefs. There was nothing to do but back out. On the following day, strong currents took the ship within two hundred yards of another rocky island. On 30 August, she struck the first reef. The engines were put in reverse, but the ship held firm until high tide floated her free. Later that night, a glimmer of light some fifteen miles away indicated that the expedition had almost reached its first destination, Fort George.

*Mr Upton is Associate Professor of History at the University of British Columbia.*

*Post Manager Donald Gillies with two of his sons, photographed about 1907 at Fort George.*




There was no sign of any Eskimo pilots, for they had grown tired of waiting for the *Stord* and had never received a second message asking them to wait a further month for the *Eldorado*. The reefs were so numerous that the Captain decided to launch the ship's boat to find a way through. The boat capsized on hitting the water, its engine was ruined, and it had to be hauled back on board. There was apparently nothing for it but that the *Eldorado* should pick its own way through the reefs. Nine miles out of Fort George, the ship struck again, this time at high tide.

George Edwin Venables, twenty-one years old, was the *Eldorado's* third engineer. This was his first long voyage, and to mark such a break from the London to Liverpool routine, he had decided to keep a diary. He now found that he had much more to record than he had ever bargained for, and was later to recount his adventures at some length. Everything was done to get the ship off the reef, he wrote, but

> When the tide fell, she listed so badly that her decks became almost vertical. Hawsers and winches were used for two days in vainly trying to pull her straight and set her free. Her screw, getting fouled somehow, stopped working. So serious were matters now that the captain insisted that the ladies, child, and other passengers should go in boats to Fort George, so as to be safe. It was well this was done, for on the Wednesday [2 September] a terrible storm came on, the ship bumped up and down on the cruel rocks, and finally tore a great hole in her bottom, through which the water rushed in volumes.
>
> We saved what food we could, and, with some clothes, got away to an island ere the doomed vessel was lost. But only some fresh rain-water was found in hollows of the rocks; nothing else to eat or of any use was discoverable.

Donald Gillies, the sole Hudson's Bay Company man at Fort George, visited d'Aigneaux and his dejected companions on the 3rd of September. Supplies at Fort George, said Gillies, were quite inadequate to feed the passengers and crew of the *Eldorado* for more than two days. Their only chance of survival was to head south

*Ship time at Fort George thirty-odd years ago.*

*The "Inenew" at Charlton Island wharf about the time the Revillon party was there.*

*The schooner "Lady Head" wrecked in 1903, abandoned on Gasket Shoals.*

before winter set in, to get to Charlton Island where a steamer belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company would shortly be sailing for London with the annual cargo of furs. Captain Berry was commendably anxious to stay with his ship and salvage what he could; d'Aigneaux would have liked to have something to show for Revillon Frères, and hoped to leave four men behind to staff a rudimentary post for his employers. But Gillies was adamant: time was short, he would help all or none. There was no real choice in the matter, and the castaways grudgingly accepted the aid of their powerful competitor. D'Aigneaux agreed that all should leave immediately, and Gillies signed a paper confirming that he had asked them to go at once as the only chance of saving their lives.

The castaways set off along the intricate passages to Charlton Island. Gillies provided two Hudson's Bay Company pilots, three lighters and some food. The pilots led the way in two lighters, Captain Berry came next in command of a sailing lighter, then followed the ship's two lifeboats. As George Venables recalled:

> It was a dreadful passage, this one to Charlton Island We had only some flour, biscuits, a little sugar, and fresh water upon which to rely for our food, and Mr Gillis has provided no small part of this. The weather was just about as bad as it well could be . . . We got separated from the pilot schooners owing to the fogs, and were lost for some time. By firing a gun we had with us, we at last found the others of the party encamped on an island. They had gone there after missing us, on the chance of hearing our signal. So terrible were the storms that more than once we were up to the body in water in the boats, and it seemed as if by no possibility could we escape being swamped and lost. Only by perpetual baling could we keep the craft afloat at all.

Despite everything, all arrived at Charlton Island, but the looked-for steamer had left the day before! As it turned out, this proved to be a rare stroke of luck, for the *Lady Head* was soon to be wrecked on Gasket Shoals.

George McKenzie, the Hudson's Bay trader at Charlton Island, was as helpful as he could be. He arranged for a few Indians to take the refugees in a small steamer, the *Inenew*, to the mouth of the Moose River, where, he thought, it would be possible to obtain canoes from Indian trappers and find a way south along the river to safety. With heavy hearts, the castaways moved on. They replenished their supplies a little and were able to get more (at what they considered exorbitant prices) along with canoes and guides at Moose Factory: four sacks of flour for each of five canoes, a hundred pounds of salt pork, some tea, a little sugar, and a few matches. Thus equipped, these voyageurs by necessity began a journey along rivers that challenged even veterans to the limit.

> We left the Moose River [Factory] on the 22nd [September], and set out on our fearsome journey of what we expected to be at least 300 miles overland to reach civilisation . . . We met many very bad rapids, and had several narrow escapes whilst the Indians were urging the canoes through them by long poles, as is their custom. At length two canoes overturned in one great rapid, and it was all we could do to save their passengers from drowning. We had to go up to our necks in water to reach the capsized canoes, and, of course, we lost most of the food they contained, which made our plight terrible.
>
> After this accident it was arranged that we should carry the canoes as much as possible where the waters were too dangerous for their safe passage. Carrying a canoe in such a place is awful work. There was no path by the riverside, of course; often men had to go first and cut away trees etc., to make one for us. Then, also, the ground was so undulating that only two men could possibly support the canoe, one in front and one behind. The banks were sometimes almost perpendicular, and thick with trees. I never saw so much timber in all my life. We camped in flimsy tents at night, but our clothes were always wet through, even before we lay down. Then it was piercingly cold, and everything froze on us.

*This group at Moose Factory about 1901 includes District Manager George McKenzie, standing at right, with A. W. Patterson the manager at Moose, and Mrs McKenzie between them.*

*Inside George McKenzie's house at Moose Factory.*

When we got up each morning, it was invariably to find that the blanket with which each person was provided was a solid piece of ice, as hard as iron, and we had to get it thawed and free as best we could . . . We endeavoured to bake some of the flour into cakes each night; but as we had no baking powder you can imagine what the result was like. Our rations at best did not run to more than half a cake each per night, and we began to feel very weak and ill from being so underfed and so much exposed. I got the Indians to show me how they made their cakes from flour, as well as they could, and we ate some of those thus made, but it was only like eating dough itself.

After several days of painful progress, the Indian guides announced that the course of the Moose River was so altered that they no longer recognised it, and the current was so strong that they would not attempt to go further. The guides suggested that the group return and follow the Abitibi River. This would make the journey some 200 miles longer, but would be much safer. Once again, there was no choice. Retracing their course and turning down the Abitibi, they found a few more provisions at New Post. There were blueberries to be picked, and the occasional deer and wildfowl supplemented their diet. For ten days the wanderers paddled, poled and portaged; the ladies found their long skirts so much in the way that they converted them into pantaloons. The Indian guides were somewhat difficult to handle, refusing to work on Sundays or in the rain. And so they continued until they reached the beginning of Lake Abitibi. There the guides stated that since they had no idea what lay ahead they were going home.

The castaways continued alone, but not for long. They met a solitary Indian later the same day, and he agreed to guide them to safety. He was returning from a hunting expedition, and said he could find the way by the sun and stars to Douglas Farm on Lac des Quinze, a lumber camp which was the northernmost reach of civilization. He took his place in the first canoe and told the others to follow close behind; linked stem to stern they proceeded through the convolutions of Lake Abitibi in the fog and rain. One morning, just before breaking camp, the travellers met an English army major out big game hunting. He was unable to offer much in the way of material comfort, but he was able to tell them who had won the America Cup race the month before. Douglas Farm came into sight on 15 October and the reluctant voyageurs were able to feast on potatoes and bread that night.

The lumber camp was little better equipped to feed and shelter such a large number of people than the remote Hudson's Bay Company posts had been, and the party pushed on overland to the banks of the Ottawa River. The only track was a logging road thigh deep in mud at

*A group of people leaving Moose Factory c. 1902 to go up-river in large canoes.*

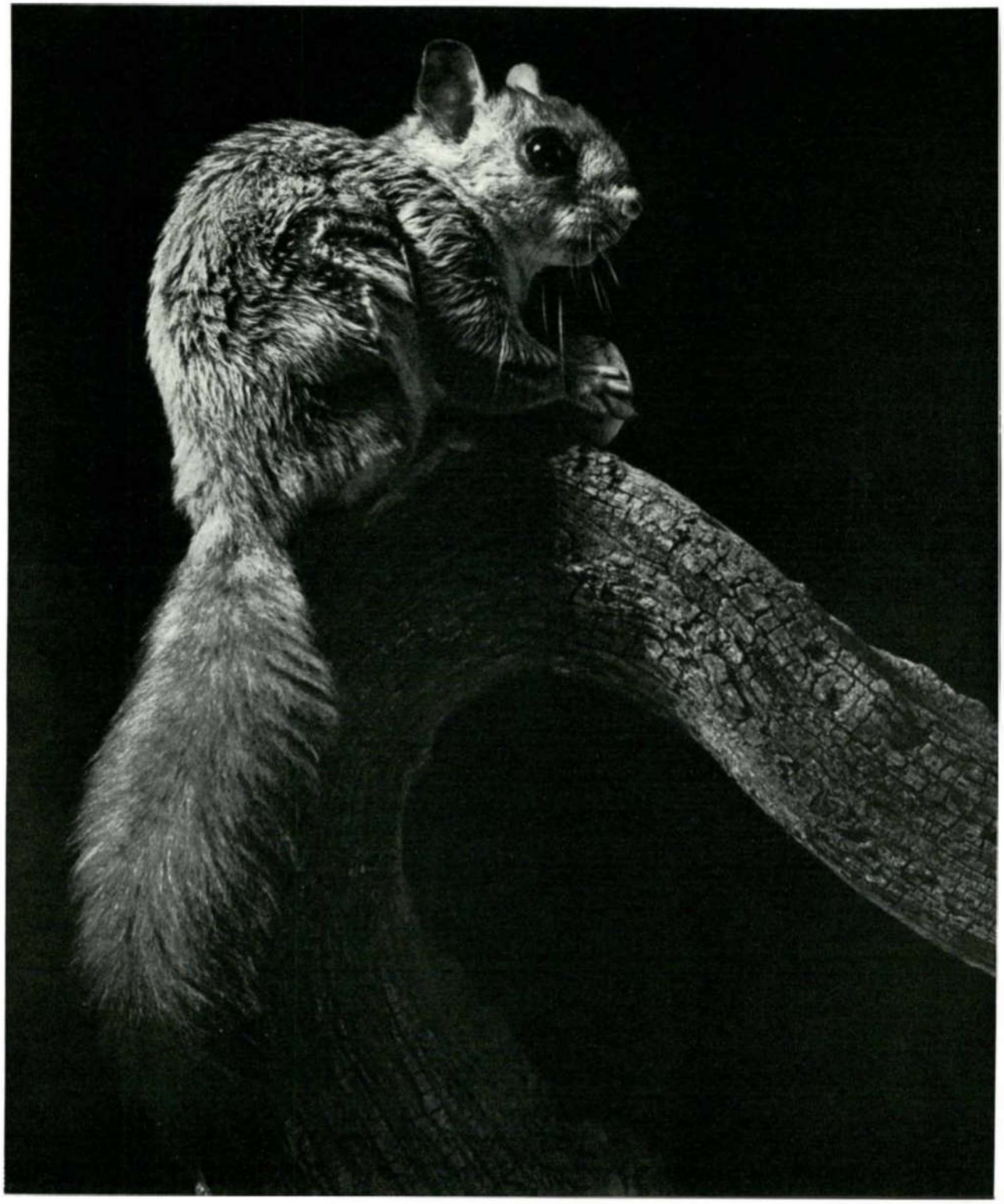
*Believed to be New Post on the Abitibi River, photographed by J. L. Cotter in 1882.*

that time of year. It was at this stage that they suffered their only casualties: two men were left by the wayside and were picked up later in reasonably good health. Arrived on the banks of the Ottawa, the castaways took a small boat to New Liskeard, where the news of their adventures was recorded by the *Globe's* correspondent. It was a tale, he wrote, "as remarkable in its way as any that has come out of the north in recent years". With some understandable confusion he wrote of portaging the *Eldorado's* lifeboat around innumerable rapids through terrain "as unknown to the party as if it had been in the heart of Africa".

From then on, everything was anticlimactic. Civilization enfolded the wanderers. One steamboat took them to South Timiskaming, another to Mattawa; from there by train to Montreal. They arrived at eight in the morning of Sunday 18 October. The passengers went home, the crew were lodged at the Sailors' Institute to await passage to England. The journey had covered 270 miles by boat through James Bay, 500 miles by canoe along the Moose and Abitibi Rivers, and not one of the forty-seven survivors of the *Eldorado* had been lost.

The wreck of the *Eldorado* put Revillon's plans back by three years. Rather naturally, they made a point of blaming the Hudson's Bay Company for the poor quality of the charts available for northern waters, and insisted that their expedition had received no help in its distress. Captain Berry too "was not very complimentary in his criticisms of the sailing charts," as a Montreal reporter tactfully put it. Certainly, Berry would have to have a good story ready: he was scheduled to meet the shareholders in Montreal a week after his return. ◆

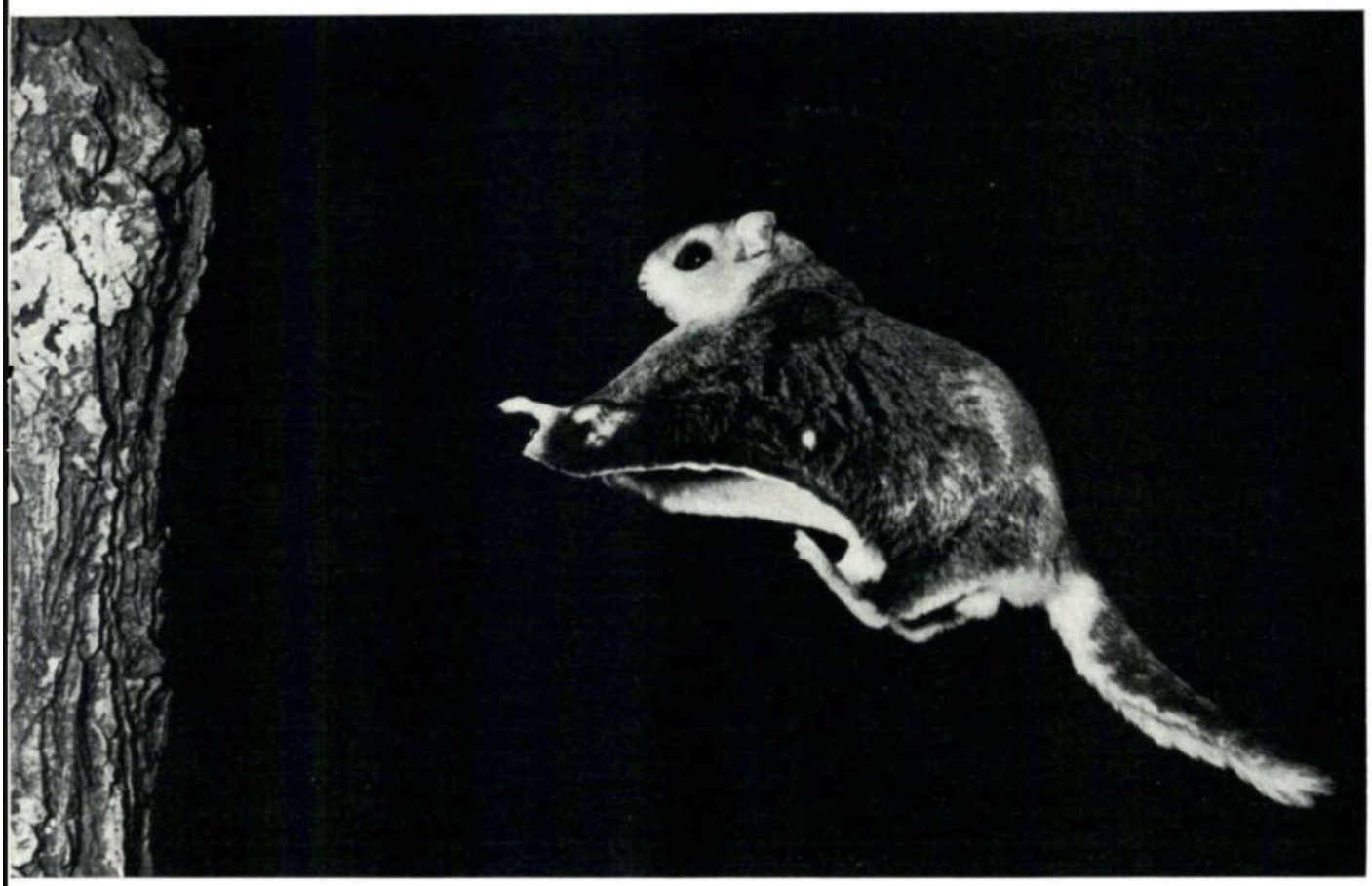
*Well dressed visitors, unlike the shipwrecked party, at a lumber camp probably in the Timiskaming and New Liskeard area.*

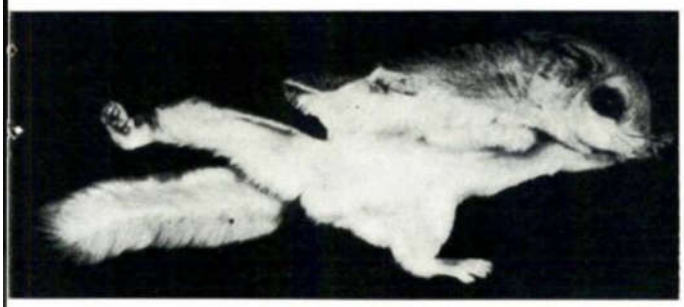


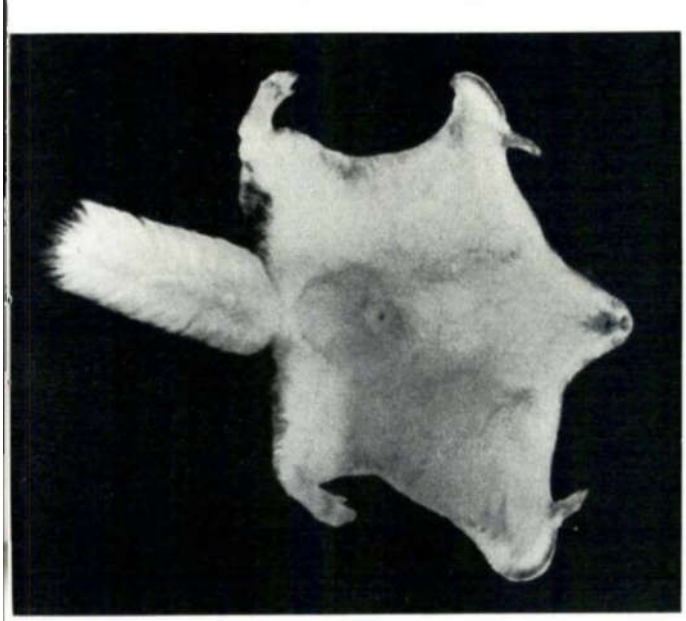
# FLYING SQUIRREL

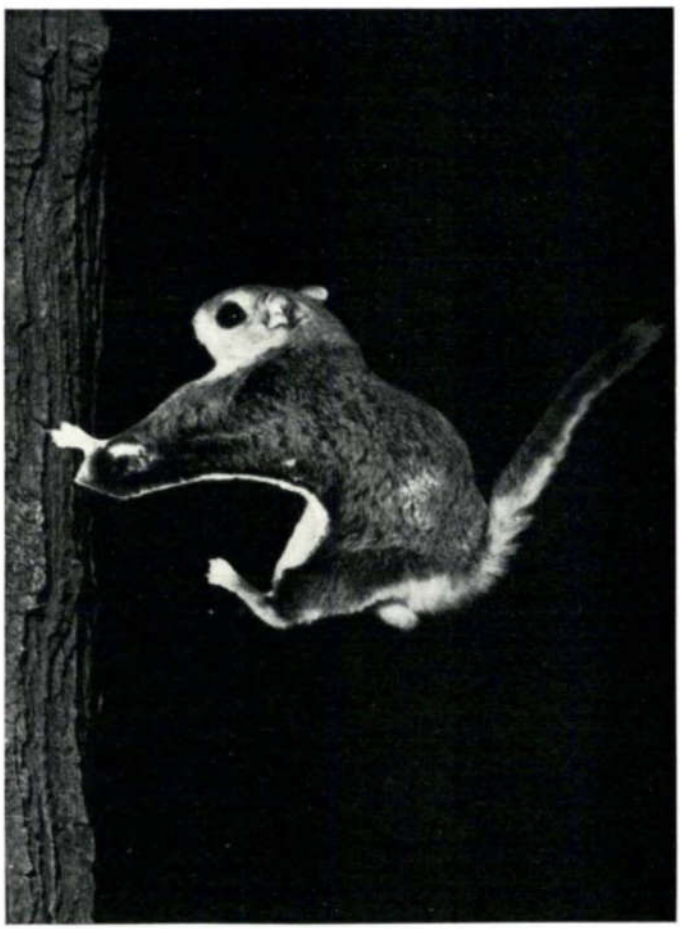
*Photos by Leonard Rue Enterprises*

Though they live in the forests right across Canada these appealing little creatures are seldom seen for they fly by night. Really they glide, spreading the fold of skin that extends from front to hind feet. As the squirrel nears a tree trunk for landing its flattened tail, which serves as a rudder, is raised and speed is checked to a stall.









# FRONTIERSMEN OF FORT ELLICE

*By James McCook*

*Associate Editor of the Ottawa "Journal" whose avocation is the history of western Canada.*

THE SITE OF FORT ELLICE is high on the west bank of the Assiniboine River about 200 miles by road from the Fort Garry gate in Winnipeg and 10 miles east of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border.

For sixty years after its establishment in 1831 it was an important Hudson's Bay Company post with a reputation for good food and hospitality. It welcomed the great figures of the fur trade and was a generous provider of buffalo meat and pemmican for distant posts. Down the winding river below moved the summer cargoes of furs and supplies and up and down the steep slopes of the valley creaked hundreds of Red River carts every season.

The Northern Department Council order of 1831 stated that a post should be established "at or in the neighbourhood of Beaver creek", in which general area there had been posts on and off since before the turn of the century. The new post was established that autumn on the creek at a point about a mile from the site of the later fort on the Assiniboine River. It was named Fort Ellice in honour of the Company director Edward Ellice, but was often called simply Beaver Creek. In 1862 the decision to move the fort had been made and the buildings on Beaver Creek were reported to be in a dilapidated condition while timber was being assembled for the buildings on the new site

No trace of it remains except furrows and pits marking the location of the stockade and buildings. In the spring the greener grass in one area indicates the boundaries of a garden which yielded bountifully.

What remains unchanged is the scenic beauty commented on by every visitor who left a diary or letters. From the cairn erected close to the position of the vanished front gates of the fort can be seen the magnificent sweep of the valley. John Sellar, one of the "Overlanders of '62", wrote that in June 1862 the valley was "as smoothe as any carpet that ever was stepped upon while the uplands were thickly covered with wild Roses and wild Peas just full bloom. In short it seemed like the home and birthplace of the choicest of Nature's beauties."

*Chief Trader William McKay, son of John Richards McKay, was the factor at Fort Ellice from 1856 to 1872.*

The land about the fort was fertile and, more than a century ago, was being put to good use by the thrifty husbandmen of the Company.

From the remnants of their journals, from which material in this article is published by permission of the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, can be built an astonishing picture of the agricultural activity, the ceaseless building and improvement of transportation and the attention to spiritual and educational needs in a prairie community generations before the flood of settlers appeared.

Three men of Fort Ellice are often mentioned in the journals—Henry Millar, who worked on the land and cared for the livestock; Jacob Beads, a halfbreed carpenter of genius often borrowed by other posts with building problems, and the Reverend Thomas Cook, a Church of England missionary, who held school classes for the children and was the brother-in-law of Chief Trader William McKay, the factor from 1856 to 1872.

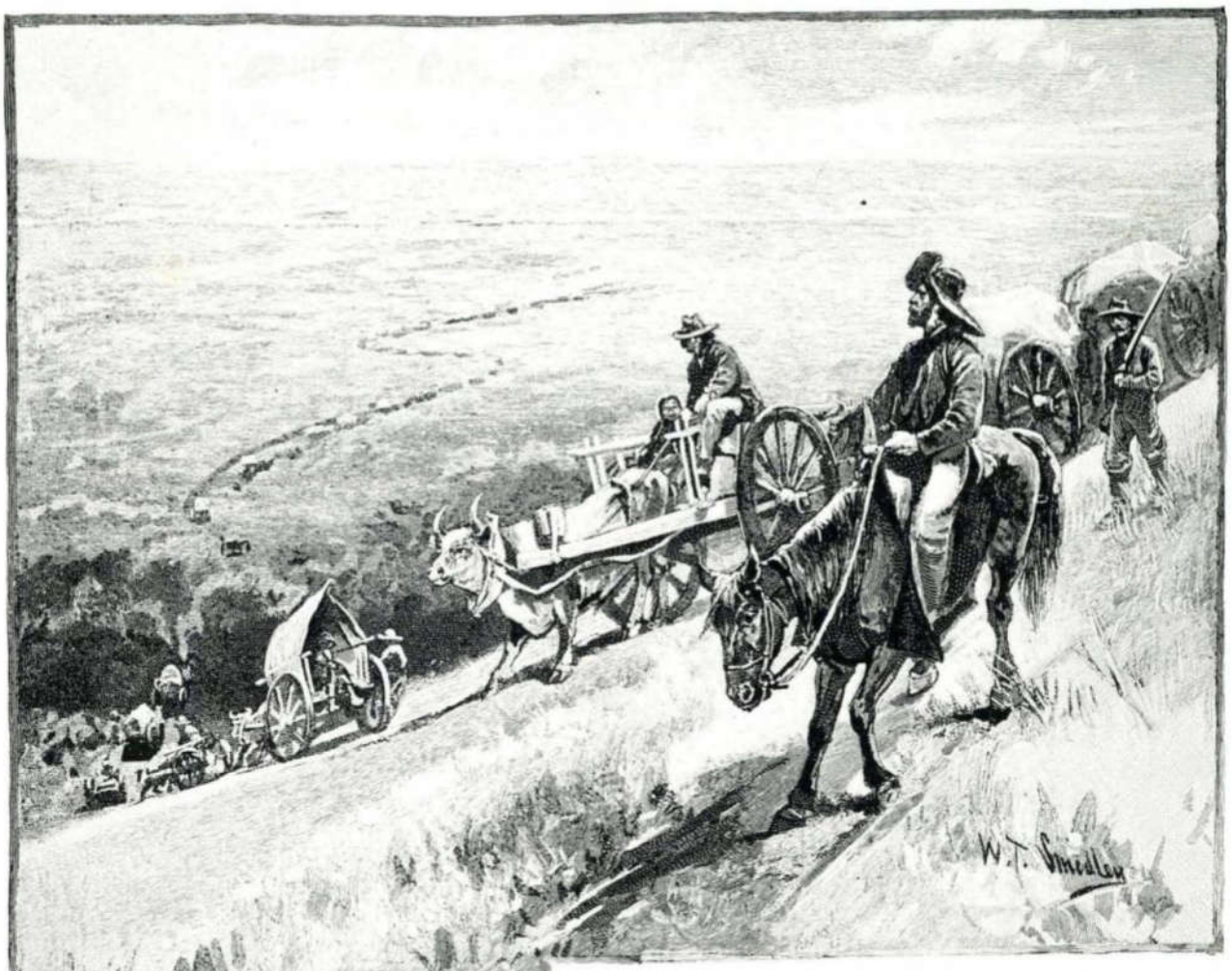
The staff at the fort ranged between ten and thirty and was thoroughly organized. There were no idlers. In normal times they lived well but occasionally they had short rations, chiefly due to generosity in feeding starving Indians who gathered about the stockade when the hunt failed.

The fort was established in 1831 in accordance with the instructions of the Council of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land "in order to protect the Trade of the Assiniboines & Crees of Upper Red River from American Opposition on the Missouri."

Only American traders and freemen who were trading on their own account were denied hospitality at Fort Ellice. In 1867, on a cold February day, two American traders arrived en route to Qu'Appelle with "4 sleds loaded with goods enough to load 20 sleds. They asked to buy hay but did not get any." Five days later, "The Yankee [had one quit?] resumed his journey to Qu'appelle there to make his fortune," the fort journal noted, ironically.

The McKays were great traders and Chief Trader William (son of John Richards McKay who took charge of Fort Ellice in 1833) was true to his prairie clan tradition. He was reputed never to forget a horse he had seen once and bargained eagerly for animals that took his fancy. The bargaining was especially keen when Americans were involved and on 18 September 1865 the factor's pen seemed to dance for joy as he wrote:

> Made a bargain with an American who was passing, gave him 3 horses with harness and carts complete for two fine yoke of oxen with yokes, chains and a large transport wagon. The oxen are splendid animals. 1 yoke are white both alike. The others are red and also well matched.



*A brigade of ox-drawn Red River carts entering the Assiniboine valley and, below, the Big House at Fort Ellice as it appeared in 1864.*

Horses were usually easily come by at Fort Ellice and Jacob Beads and his helpers made harness and carts. It was a good deal.

John Millar did not live to see this transaction but he would have been pleased.

The journals for 1858 and 1859 give details of Millar's work. In May '58, he was guiding the men and women who were cutting potatoes for seed, with little time to observe Captain John Palliser, the explorer, on his way west to rejoin his companions who had wintered there. On 25 May Millar had finished the ploughing and field

sowing and next day was sowing turnips in the kitchen garden. On 2 June he was "milking and attending the cows and doing sundries little jobs in the gardens", on the 18th he was planting cabbage and his varied tasks continued during the summer season. On 6 September he was probably with the six men cutting hay across the river, in the valley flats where the Fouillard brothers of St Lazare grow good crops today.

While Millar was busy with the farm on that autumn day, Chief Trader McKay surveyed the storehouses, cooled with ice brought from the river during the winter, and noted there were 11,518 pounds of pemmican on hand, along with 4,782 pounds of dried meat and 500 pounds of grease, the produce of buffalo hunts.

In October Millar supervised the building of haystacks, and hauled dung from the byres to the fields. During the Christmas and New Year festivities there is no mention of him being involved in the drinking which led Mr McKay on 2 January 1859 to make this dolorous entry:

> Cold weather. Everyone quiet after fighting last night. Sanderson got a black eye. This morning Francois Whiteford also got a black eye and Charles Matwaywin got a black eye and Spence a sweld face.

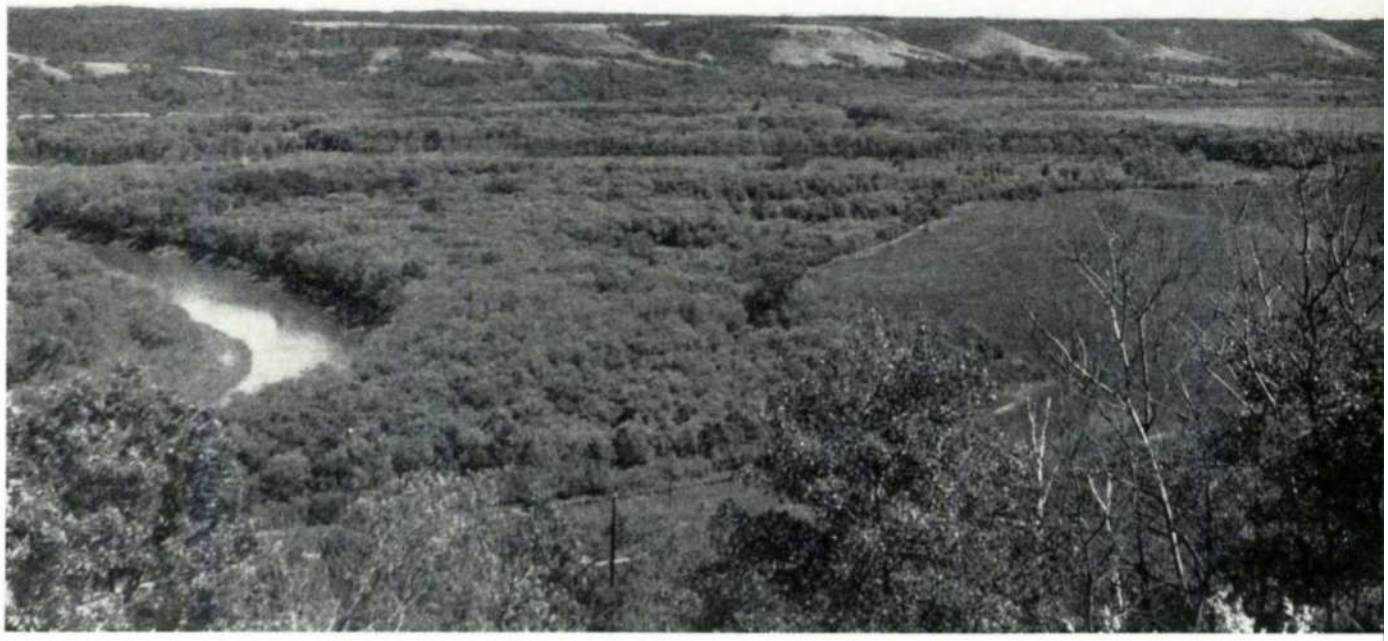
Perhaps Millar's health had started to fail and he was in no mood for celebrations. On 6 April, when he should have been busy with preparations for spring planting, he was very ill and on the 8th he died. A man named Birston made the coffin, Thomas Macklin dug the grave, George Sanderson looked after the cattle and, in the evening of 9 April, "we buried the corps".

Of the man John Millar the journals reveal little, but his good work lived after him. The land he had cared for produced 137 loads of hay in 1866 and 44 kegs of potatoes, each of $3\frac{1}{2}$ bushels.

Weary travellers relished the fresh butter and cool milk from the icehouse made possible by the cattle that he saw had good grazing in summer and comfortable barns in winter. John McDougall, the Methodist missionary, enjoyed such rare delights on his way east in 1863. Mrs McKay, sister of the Anglican missionary, served not only butter and milk at supper but also pancakes and maple syrup. Out in the foothills, Mr McDougall, who was from Ontario, had not tasted maple syrup for four years and had not even tasted a slice of bread for two years.

Old-timers, years after the fort had vanished, would

*Indian camp outside the earlier Fort Ellice in 1859.*



*Looking over this valley from the Fort the men could observe the approach of travellers or see the steamboats that in the '80s came up from Winnipeg.*

visit the site of the old bake oven and recall the wonderful meals it had made possible. It was not only bread and butter that made Fort Ellice's table famous. The garden produced fresh vegetables in season. Hunters brought in buffalo and deer meat. Fishermen caught goldeye in the river. Indian women gathered wild fruit in abundance.

John Millar, busy with farm and livestock, had a counterpart in industry in Jacob Beads, the carpenter.

The latter must often have wondered whether he could meet all the demands upon his skill which included the construction of boats and carts as well as buildings. Completion of the new fort on the Assiniboine, planned in 1862, took years and Jacob Beads was involved in every part of the operation.

On 6 January 1863 Jacob Beads was off with sleds to find wood "to make a stare case into the Big House", the residence of the factor and quarters for officers and clerks. It was located at the back of a square, opposite the front gates, and was 2½ storeys high, 40 feet by 60 with a large kitchen at the back and a balcony and verandah in front. It was built of eight-inch logs 10 feet long and the entrance opened into a large recreation and council hall. There were five fireplaces and a Carron stove on the ground floor and visitors long remembered the comfort they enjoyed there on cold days and evenings.

Later in January 1863 Beads had the help of two other men in planing boards for a partition in the garret of the Big House. In February he was left in charge of the fort when Mr McKay visited Fort Pelly and, apart from his supervisory duties, worked with another man in sawing oak to make wheels for a buggy owned by Chief Factor William J. Christie.

There seemed nothing that Beads could not do with wood. From wheelwright duty for a senior office of the fur trade, he turned to the construction of boats to take the cargoes of pemmican, meat, and furs to Fort Garry. In March he had time to put facings on windows in the Big House and on 6 May he had finished two boats and put them in the river. Next day he was off down river steering one of them and on 27 May he was back putting shingles on the Big House.

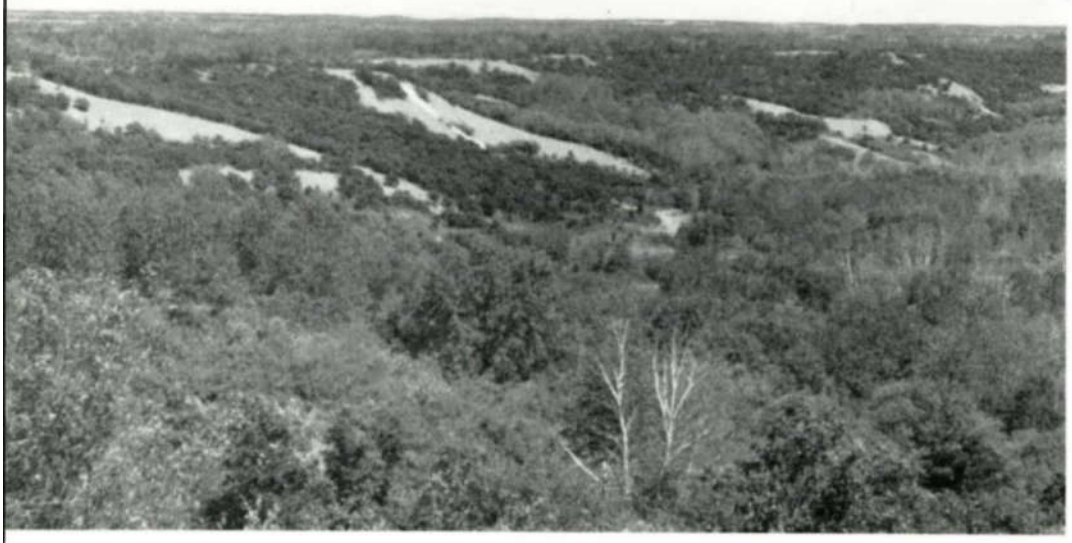
Apparently the old site was still being used in 1864. The journal for 1 June, for once written in pencil instead of ink states:

> A sad accident happened today. 4 freemen from the Portage arrived today for some supplies for the Plain hunting and while they were getting their supplies one of them commenced striking fire in the store and blowed up the store and killed him self and an other man & 5 others were badly hurt.

The assumption is that he started to light his pipe near a powder keg. Pioneers of the district agreed that the explosion occurred at the Beaver Creek site where scattered stones beside foundation pits today could readily be accepted as evidence of a violent end to a building or buildings. Work at the new site was proceeding apace at the time of the accident.

In October 1864, five months after the explosion, Jacob Beads was flooring the new store, which probably had been given priority. In 1865 he had leave to go to the Red River Settlement in August "on account of ill-health" and was given provisions for a month. Evidently his health was restored. In May 1866 the stockade at the

*The Big House at Fort Ellice, shown in the winter of 1889-90, was built by the Company carpenter Jacob Beads.*



*Above: These scattered stones were part of the foundations of the first Fort Ellice on the bank of Beaver Creek.*

*Left: Looking down Beaver Creek from the first site of the Fort, a white streak can be seen on the left bank, in the centre of the picture, which marks the site of the lime kiln operated by the men from Fort Ellice who used the lime to brighten the walls of their establishment.*

J. McCOOK PHOTOS

new fort—pointed pickets of spruce about 15 feet high and eight to nine inches in diameter—was finished at a timely moment. The journal reflects a moderate degree of anxiety about a party of hungry Sioux hanging about the fort which might become dangerous.

In June, Beads, accompanied by his family, was sent off to Fort Qu'Appelle to help with new buildings there and a week after he left some of the men at Fort Ellice dressed the flag staff and put it up. Louis Gardespai made the weathercock for the top. In the hospitable way of Fort Ellice it became the custom to welcome visitors, who might be seen approaching two miles away across the valley, by raising the H B C flag on the pole.

In that same summer of 1866 the advance of modernity was reflected in the journal note that two men had put the mowing machine together. One wonders what John Millar, who doubtless was competent with a scythe, would have thought of that!

Jacob Beads probably was still away when Mr McKay turned all hands to the construction of a bridge across the Qu'Appelle River, which joins the Assiniboine about four miles upstream from Fort Ellice. On both rivers the Company had provided scows for crossings, slow, laborious operations cursed by non-Company travellers who were charged a ferry fee. McKay kept his men at bridge construction and it must have seemed when the bridge was finished that it would last forever. Jacob Beads was back at Fort Ellice in the fall and no doubt cast an expert eye over the work done. But in the following spring, on 18 April 1867, Walter J. S. Traill, apprentice clerk, was sent out to see how the bridge fared with ice in the rivers moving. He returned in haste

saying that ice and rubbish jammed against it threatened to sweep it away and all hands had to turn out, working until after dark in cold weather, to get the obstructions cleared. Even so, some of the posts on the new bridge had been torn away. Meantime, the journal notes with an air of satisfaction that 32 shillings had been collected from freemen on the same day for use of the Assiniboine scow.

In April, Beads and his helpers had been engaged in finishing the handsome sitting-room on the ground floor of the Big House but no doubt they were called out to help at the Qu'Appelle bridge.

When N. M. W. J. McKenzie arrived at Fort Ellice as carpenter in 1876, his assistants were three Indians who had worked with Jacob Beads on the Big House. They had been taught by that "highly respected servant of the Company" to hew logs, build York boats, scows, Red River carts, make snowshoes, dog sleds and do other work in wood. Jacob was the great authority in all these lines and a first-class workman as could be seen in the many samples of his handiwork at the fort. Jacob Beads was then an old man and had gone to Fort Pelly, where he died, but the well equipped workbench that he had made, and many of his tools stamped with his initials, remained in the workshop to be used by Mr McKenzie.

The Big House was one of the last buildings to go when they were sold to settlers for timber 25 years later when the buffalo had vanished and bateaux and canoes on the river and the Red River carts on the trails alike had been supplanted by the railway. In St Lazare even to this day there is recollection of the fine workmanship in the Big House observed by the pioneers and described to their children. In a "History of Fort Ellice", mimeographed by the St Lazare High School, Jacob Beads is remembered as the Builder of the Big House, "a halfbreed carpenter of great skill".

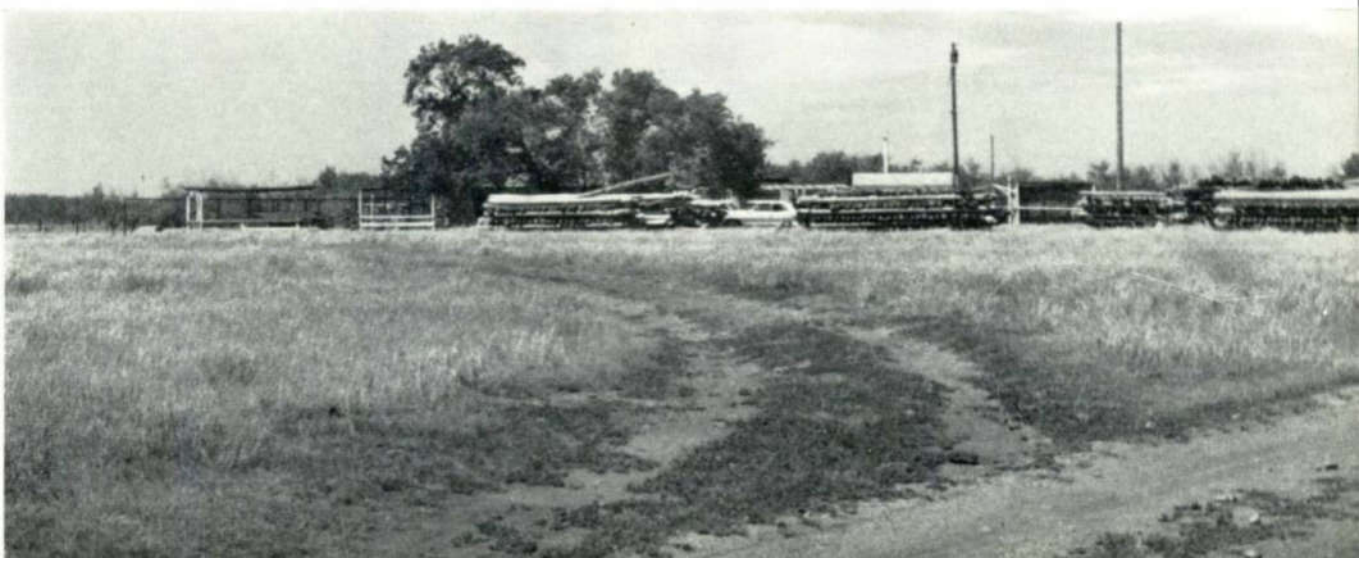
One man who saw all the activities of the fort but did not become involved in them, unless as a volunteer, was the Rev. Thomas Cook, the Anglican missionary. The Church of England mission had been established at Fort Ellice in 1854 and the missionaries stationed there paid visits to Fort Pelly, Qu'Appelle and other points. Mr. Cook must have enjoyed the comforts of Fort Ellice after hard days on the trail and the fort journal marks his frequent absences on duty. He evidently was provided with accommodation within the stockade, although the mission church was outside, and one account of life in the old fort says Mr McKay noted with satisfaction that his brother-in-law had moved to his own house in 1868, adding, "High time, been six years about it".

The journals seen by this writer indicate nothing but goodwill and sympathy for Mr Cook. In 1862 it is noted that he had a service on Sunday "and keeps school Sunday as well as weekdays". Two years later bleak tragedy struck the Cooks. On 17 November 1864, their second child, Edwin, died and on Sunday, ten days later, his brother died. Despite this second bereavement, Mr Cook on that Sunday had services morning and evening. A month later, at Christmas, Mr Cook held services and also, as the usual drinking began among the men, made one of the staff who had liquor, put it "in store". Two months later, on 26 February 1865, Mrs Cook had a son and Mr Cook held a divine service. In August of that year Mr and Mrs Cook went off to the Red River Settlement on what appears to have been a vacation.

Mr Cook was given much credit by his church for his work among the Indians. A few years after the deaths of his children at Fort Ellice he was moved to Whitemud River, near Portage la Prairie, to serve a settled congregation far different from the wandering Indians who came and went at the more westerly outposts where he had worked.

This account is no more than fragments from the lives of three good men who, in their various ways, made a contribution to civilization on the frontier. They are little remembered but if Fort Ellice is rebuilt, as is proposed by the owners of the site, the Fouillard brothers, they deserve a place of honour in any descriptive book. In the undramatic way of the true frontiersmen, they helped to win the West. ◆

*Beyond the old pioneer trail are logs to be used for reconstruction of a stockade taken down in 1877.* J. MCCOOK



# Some Orchids of the North

*BY PEGGY YOUNG*

ORCHIDS! To many people the word brings a mental picture of brilliant flowers in tropical rain forests or artificial-looking blossoms in steamy hot-houses. But there are other orchids, which grow almost unnoticed throughout the temperate and boreal zones of the earth. Compared with their flamboyant, tropical cousins these northern orchids are small and inconspicuous, easily overlooked by the casual passer-by, but they are nevertheless true orchids, members of one of the largest plant families in the world.

The orchid family (Orchidaceae) consists of more than 15,000 species, 175 of which occur in North America. The great number and diversity of species indicate that it is a very ancient family, although no fossilized orchids have ever been found. While the tropical orchids are mostly epiphytes (that is, they support themselves on other vegetation), the northern orchids are terrestrial, growing rooted in the earth. Some of them feed upon decaying organic matter instead of manufacturing their own food, and they all have certain rigid requirements in the way of moisture and temperature.

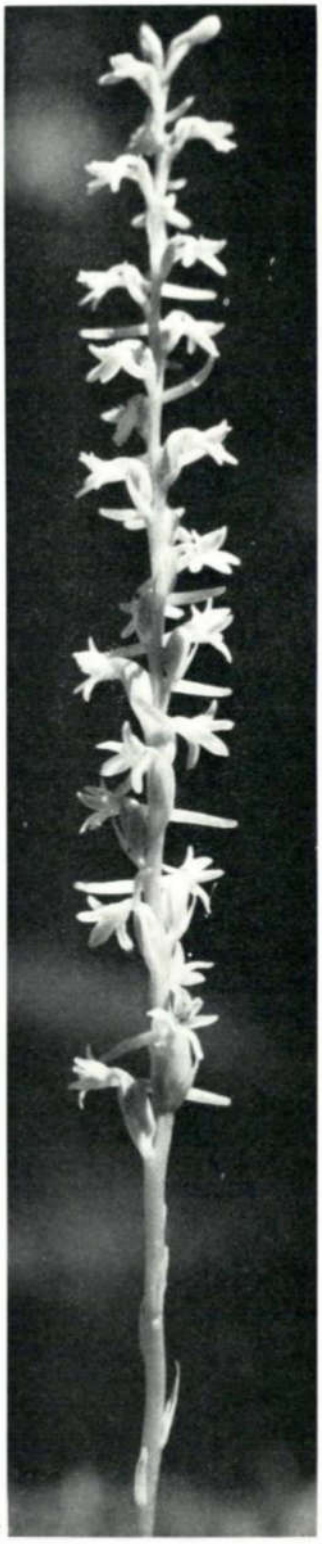
The orchid flower is different in some respects from any other flower. It has three petals and three sepals, the sepals are usually coloured like the two lateral petals. The third petal is the "lip" or "slipper", and may be greatly expanded, brightly coloured, or stretched out at the back to form a spur. The reproductive organs are united in a structure found only in orchids, known as the "column", and in some species there is a leaf-shaped part, brilliantly coloured, on top of the column and arching forward over the lip. There is much variation in colouring and shape of the petals and sepals among the

different species, but the smallest, most inconspicuous orchid flower will be found, on close examination, to possess in miniature all the characteristics of the family, including the unique column.

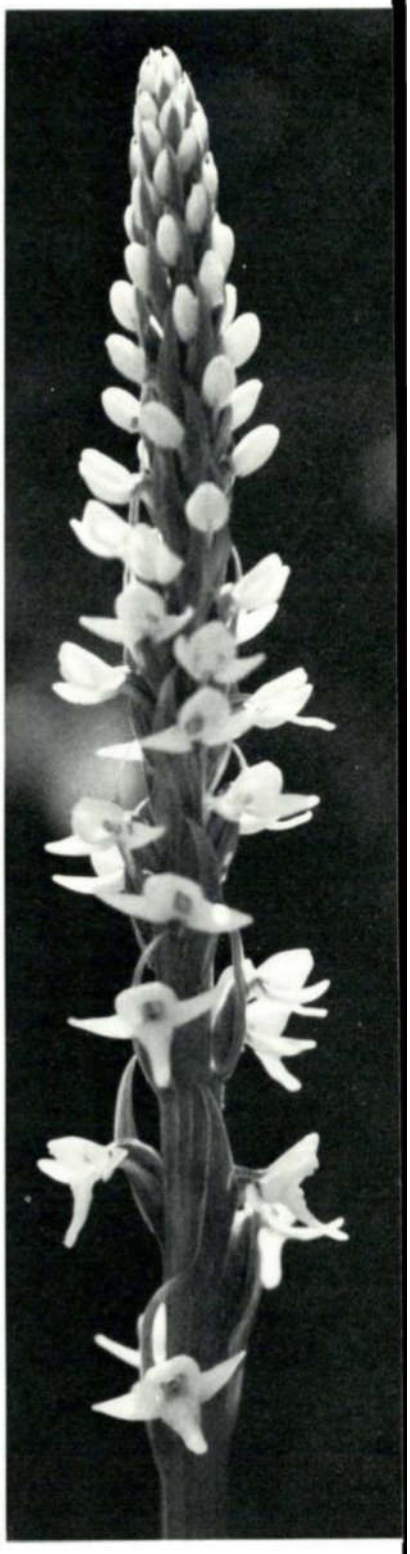
Pollination of orchids depends entirely on insects, and with some species on only one kind of insect. The seeds are minute and extremely numerous (Greenwich Observatory once counted 3,770,000 in a single capsule), and they differ from the seed of other plants in having no stored reserves of food for the young seedling. Conditions of soil, moisture and temperature must be exactly right for germination to take place, and in some cases the presence of certain fungi in the soil is essential. Out of the millions of seeds scattered by each plant, very few survive.

The orchids in Canada are widely distributed, and the different species flourish in a great diversity of habitat. They are found from sea level to the alpine meadows, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the southern border to the Arctic Circle beyond the tree line. Some of them grow in the forest, others in open meadows, in dry woods or wet marshes, on the banks of streams or on gravelled slopes, or in the acid soil of the northern bogs.

Although some species are rare, and are known only to a few botanical explorers, others grow in crowded colonies wherever the terrain fulfills their needs. Best known, probably, are the Cypripedium, the pink showy lady's slipper adopted as the floral emblem of Prince Edward Island, and the yellow lady's slipper. Unfortunately some of the most beautiful native orchids are in danger of being wiped out by the ever-expanding clearing and cultivating of the land; the power-saw and the bulldozer upset the delicate balance of growing conditions required by these fragile plants, and overnight they disappear. Those who wish to find them must go farther into the wilds each year. To anyone interested in wild flowers or in wild life in general, however, it is well worth the effort it takes to seek them out, for there are few sights more rewarding than a glimpse of one of these little orchids of the north.



1. WOOD REIN-ORCHID (*Habenaria unalascensis var. elata*). *The flower of the Wood Rein-Orchid (Long-spiked Piperia or Elegant Piperia) is very similar to that of the Slender Spire Orchid, but has a longer spur. This species grows usually in dry woods, and has been found at elevations from sea level to 8,000 feet.*



2. WHITE-FLOWERED BOG-ORCHID (*Habenaria dilatata var. leucostachys*). *Also known as Leafy White Orchid or Fragrant White Orchid, this sweet-scented plant, up to 3 feet tall, grows in swamps, along stream banks and in wet forests.*

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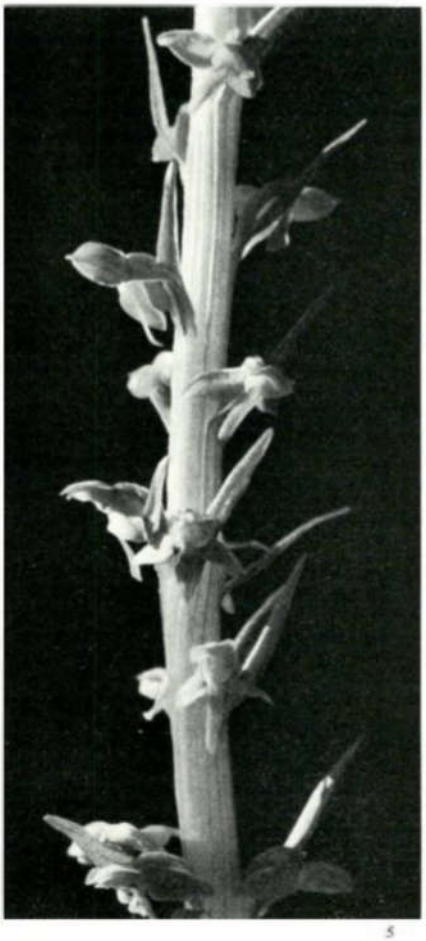

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3. SPOTTED CORAL-ROOT (*Corallorhiza maculata*). *All the Coral-Roots get their nourishment from decaying matter in the ground instead of manufacturing their own food. The flower of the Spotted Coral-Root has purple petals and sepals and a white, purple-spotted lip; the sheath-like leaves and stout, 15 inch stalk are also a purplish colour. The plant seems to tolerate a variety of temperature conditions and grows across the continent in damp or dry woods.*

4. RATTLESNAKE PLANTAIN (*Goodyera oblongifolia*). *Other common names for this orchid are Green-Leaved Rattlesnake Orchid and Western Rattlesnake. The variegated patterns on the evergreen leaves somewhat resemble the markings on a rattlesnake's skin, and it is believed that the Indians formerly used the plant in the treatment of snakebites. Its range is continent-wide in the forests.*

5. GREEN-FLOWERED BOG-ORCHID (*Habenaria hyperborea*). *"Hyperborea", a Greek word meaning "beyond the north", is a reference to the fact that this orchid grows within the Arctic Circle. Its green flowers are borne on a stout, erect stalk, about 2 feet high in the southern part of its range, but much smaller in the north. It grows in marshes and peat bogs, in wet forests and wet meadows and along the banks of streams.*

6. WESTERN CORAL-ROOT (*Corallorhiza mertensia*). *The Western Coral-Root is taller and more slender than the spotted variety, and more restricted in range. The whole flower is the same reddish-purple colour as the stalk and the bract-like leaves. It is found chiefly in damp, coniferous forests.*

7. SLENDER SPIRE ORCHID (*Habenaria unalascensis*). *The Slender Spire Orchid (Alaska Piperia, Alaska Orchid or Western Rein-Orchid) bears many small, white flowers in a dense spike about 16 inches tall. Its varied habitat includes deep forests, grassy slopes, gravelly stream banks, dry woods and open meadows.*

8. FALSE LADYSLIPPER (*Calypso bulbosa*). *One of the commonest as well as one of the most beautiful of the northern orchids, this plant goes by a number of names, including Calypso, Fairy Slipper, Cytheria, Pink Slipper-Orchid, Hider-of-the-North and Deer-Head Orchid. It grows across Canada from Labrador to British Columbia in bogs and swamps and in the damp moss on the forest floor.*

9. HOODED LADIES' TRESSES (*Spiranthes romanzoffiana*). *"Spiranthes" refers to the spiral arrangement of the flowers on the stalk of this orchid; "romanzoffiana" is in honour of Nicholas Romanzof, a Russian Minister of State and patron of science. This species is widespread across Canada, as far north as the Arctic Circle, and appears also in many states of the U.S.A. and in Ireland. It grows chiefly in moist or wet locations and occasionally in dry woods.*

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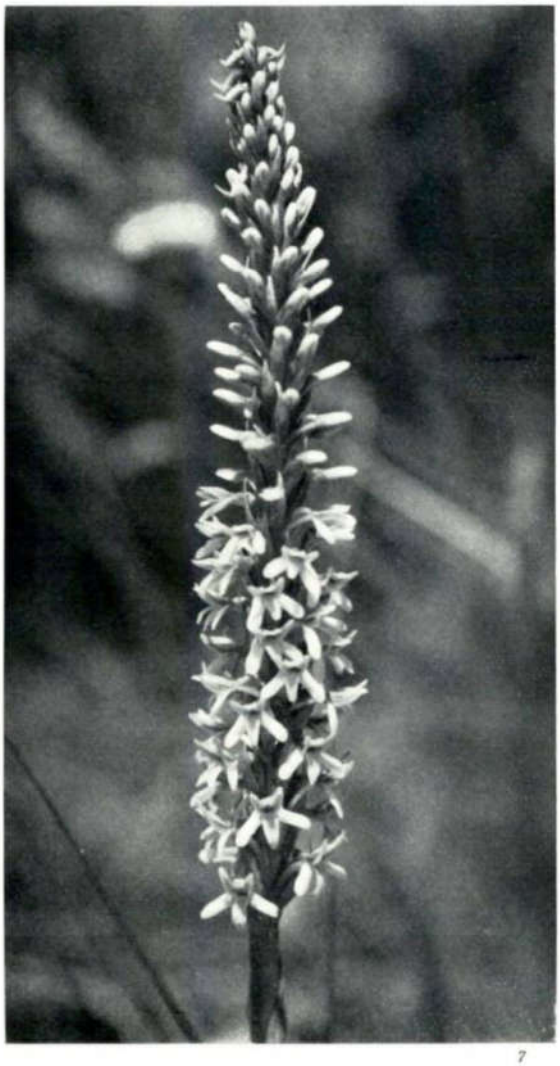

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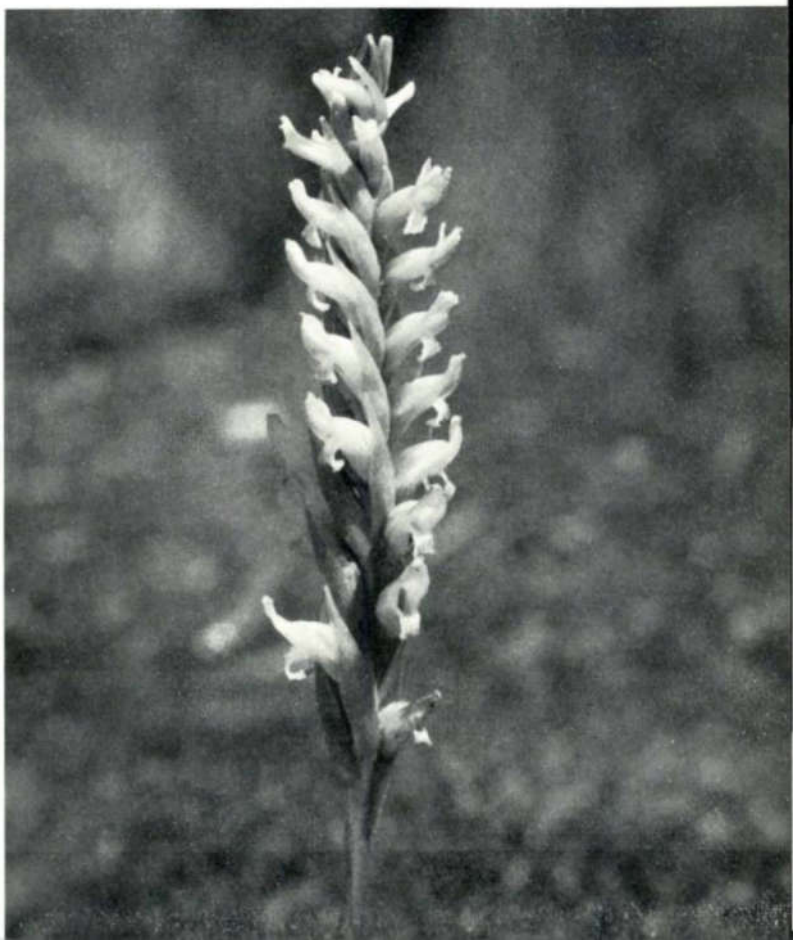

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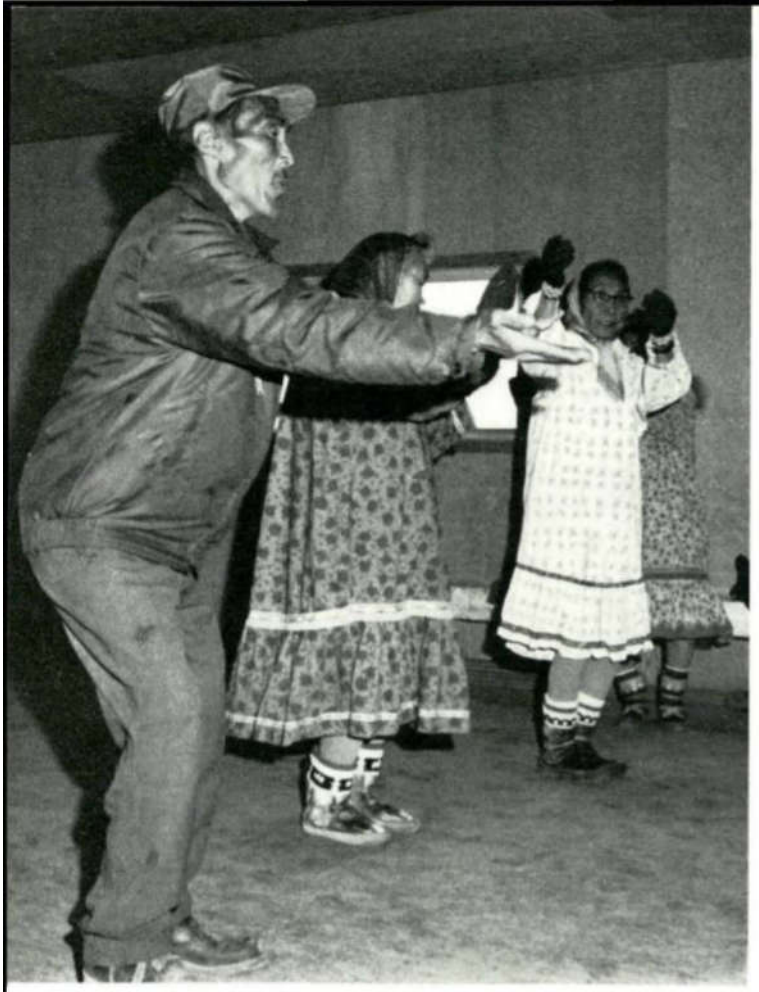


*Women dancers accompanied by Amos Paul rehearse in the Ingamo hall before their trip to Banff.*

# DANCE OF THE ANCIENT ONES

BY JOHN J. HONIGMANN

*Research Professor of Anthropology at the University of North Carolina*

THE ARCTIC KNOWS two kinds of drum-dancing. One, belonging to the Eskimo of the central and eastern region, was recently filmed in full colour among the Netsilik Eskimo of Pelly Bay. It consists of an individual dancing as he accompanies himself on a large, handled tambourine drum. In the other kind, pictured on these pages, an ensemble dances to the accompaniment of an orchestra composed of several drummers who also sing. This type of drum-dancing is distinctive of the Western Arctic, especially northern Alaska.

From Nunivak Island eastward to the Mackenzie, group dancing that involves elements of competition, mimicry, exuberant individualism, as well as stereotyped formality has long been popular and formed the core of ceremonies held in crowded village clubhouses (kazigi). Nobody has yet traced precisely when such dancing reached the Mackenzie River Eskimo. Recently, however, newspapers have reported a professional dance company from the Mackenzie Delta carrying this arctic art form to appreciative audiences in Edmonton, Banff, and Fairbanks. Undoubtedly some of the songs and dance numbers originally came to the Mackenzie region from Point Barrow and other North Alaskan points. After all,

*Alec Gordon demonstrates the men's vigorous, exhibitionistic style of dancing.*

*"The ancient ones" formally dressed in elaborate parkas and boots give a performance at the high school graduation ball.*

from John Murdoch's report (in the Bureau of Ethnology 9th Annual Report, 1892) we know that at least as far back as the spring of 1882 Mackenzie Eskimo living on the Canadian coast occasionally visited Point Barrow. Since then the east-west traffic has continued without let-up. Most Delta Eskimo trace their descent from Alaska and recount how drum-dancing songs have come from their friends and relatives in that state. But the dancing must be long established in Canada, judging from the recollections of a 57-year-old woman of coastal origin. As a child she heard her mother relate that the people had performed similar dances back when *she* was still a child, which must have been around 1880.

Present-day artists are mostly of Alaskan extraction. Under the energetic leadership of Billy Day, a government clerk in Inuvik when he is not taking the role of manager, the company of dancers and drummers has won considerable popularity in the Delta and from public performances in western Canada and Alaska. Most of the artists live in Inuvik but prior to a tour others whose homes are in Aklavik and Tuktoyaktuk fly to town for rehearsals in the Ingamo Association's Community Hall. Broadcast announcements over CHAK invite spectators to the rehearsals, which in turn raise money to help defray the dance troupe's expenses. At rehearsals women dancers wear their customary "Mother Hubbard" parkas, but without lining in summer, for dancing makes them hot. In formal performances, men and women dancers use specially decorated costume parkas often made of blue stroud, that long-standing tradecloth of the North, and gloves adorned with fur tassels. Not all formal performances take place outside of Inuvik. During local celebrations, like Dominion Day or the high school's commencement dance, Inuvik members exhibit their skills on the polished floor of Sir Alexander Mackenzie Federal School gymnasium. Some pictures shown here were taken when the Eskimo dancers joined the Centennial celebration in July, 1967.

As in northern Alaskan dancing, described by travellers and anthropologists (Margaret Lantis summarizes such accounts in her useful book, *Alaskan Eskimo Ceremonialism*, published in 1947), men's and women's dance styles diverge. Men perform vigorously, individualistically, and exhibitionistically. Women move more gracefully, in unison, and in more restrained but still expressive postures.

*Amos Paul mimes a story during the rehearsal.*

Some dance numbers mimic a story while others are "just dances". Singing in Eskimo is also varied; sometimes sung words tell a story but in other songs the drummers chant meaningless syllables. Songs that narrate a story do not necessarily accompany pantomimic dancing. One narrative song that is also cleverly enacted by the dancers tells of a man long ago who brought a muzzle-loader and of the trouble he then had trying to fix it so it would shoot straight. Another tale describes a trapper happily awakening and setting out on a trapline. All day he walks about joyfully visiting his traps. "I am happy and have no worries" the chorus sings Each of the numerous songs has its history that credits it with a place of origin—like Point Hope, Colville River, or the Mackenzie Delta itself. A composer is also recalled or, in some cases, the person who originally brought it to the Delta and there taught it to others. For example, the song of the trapper was composed about twenty-five years ago by Old Nutik, a deceased Alaskan Eskimo who trapped in the Delta. Eskimos also distinguish distinctive styles of singing and drumming belonging to the coastal Sigliarq and Nunatahmiut or delta people. Each style causes a bit of trouble to those not at home with it. Long residence in Aklavik and Inuvik has enabled a few Indians and white people to learn Eskimo dances. They have even joined in local exhibitions, but none belongs to Billy Day's Eskimo dance troupe.

When one night in the gym after the rock-and-roll had stopped, a woman observed that "Now the ancient ones will dance," she was referring to the ripe maturity of the dancers and drummers. Their average age is about 62 years. This recalls that Murdock, writing of 1881-3, described the drummers at Point Barrow as being old men. "What would happen if all these people died off?" a concerned Eskimo in Inuvik demanded. "How are we going to keep up that tradition so that it never dies off?" The young are not taking over. Back in 1953 an R.C.M. Police report sent from Aklavik bemoaned the fact that young people were refusing to learn "Husky dancing" and the same unwillingness continues today. A few years ago Tommy Goose conducted a dance class in the now discontinued Rehabilitation Centre, but it did not train any people to serve as replacements for the "ancient ones". Hence the fear that the art will soon die out.

Town living by itself has not killed Eskimo drum-dancing. Quite the contrary. Inuvik with its large gym floor, halls, interested backers, financial resources, and large Eskimo population that includes a number of talented oldsters who have come from several points has actually made possible the revival of this type of classic arctic dancing whose history goes back to dense Eskimo villages facing arctic seas. •

*The drummers also provide a chorus to which the ensemble dances. Caribou skin, kept moist with water, provides covers for tambourine drums which are struck from beneath. After the performance Billy Day, dance-troupe manager, packs the drums.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR

# ON THE BARRENS 1934

*BY W. GILLIES ROSS*

*Head of the Department of Geography at Bishop's University.*

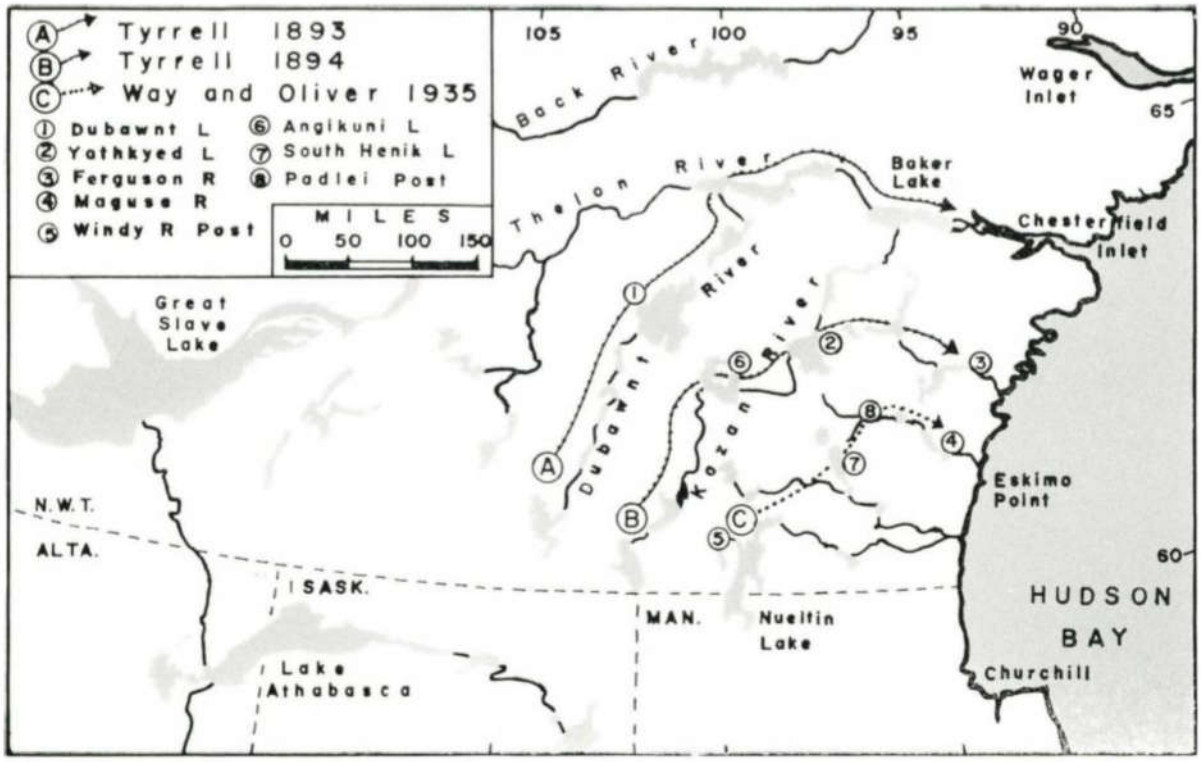
IN 1934 the geology of northern Canada was poorly known. Between Hudson Bay and the valley of the Mackenzie River there were six hundred miles of rugged, glacier-scoured Canadian Shield country. Much of it was arctic tundra, rich in caribou but inhabited by only a small population of inland Eskimos and a handful of white traders. Few geologists, or indeed men of any profession, had any acquaintance with the area.

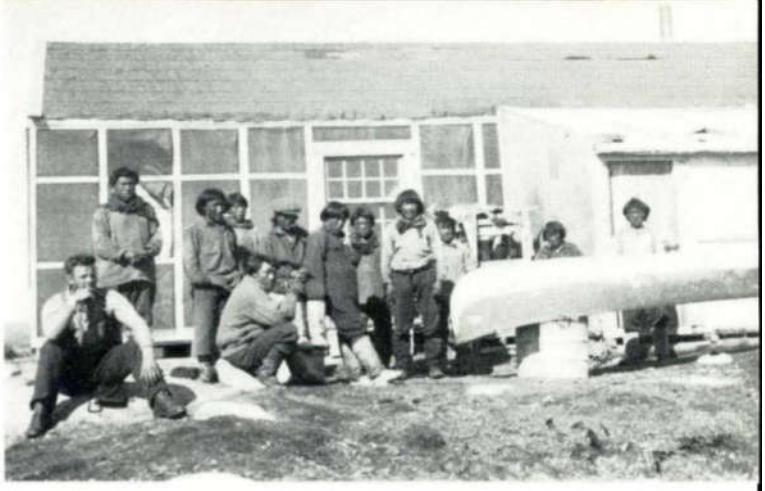
Two notable traverses had been made in 1893 and 1894 by the government geologist J. B. Tyrrell, the first traverse from Lake Athabasca northward through Dubawnt Lake and eastward via Baker Lake to Chesterfield Inlet, and the second northward from Kasba Lake, down the Kazan, through Yathkyed Lake and down the Ferguson River to Hudson Bay. In 1934 the Cyril Knight Prospecting Company decided to send a geological party to complete another arc-shaped traverse inside those of Tyrrell, from Nueltin Lake to the mouth of the Maguse River.

The party consisted of Harold Way, a doctoral student in geology at the University of Toronto; Alec Stewart, a mining engineer; and Mike McCart and Sherman Oliver, both prospectors. In March 1934 the four men were deposited by ski-equipped plane at Windy Lake, N.W.T., with their supplies and the maps prepared by J. B. Tyrrell almost forty years before.

On the eve of Harold Way's departure for the North a Niagara Falls newspaper had reported that the expedition was travelling "under secret orders" and revealed that pitchblende discoveries were expected. In September 1935, when the party returned, the Buffalo *Times* described their search for "platinum, gold, silver, or other metals," and stressed the confidential nature of their results. In fact there was nothing specially secretive about the expedition, and no particular mineral was sought. The object was general geological reconnaissance and mapping.

Nueltin Lake extends some seventy miles into the District of Keewatin from northern Manitoba. Slightly west of its northern part, about eighty feet higher and much smaller, is Windy Lake, straddling the tree line. Between the two lakes and located on the Windy River





*Sherman Oliver at winter camp at Windy River post of Revillon Frères.*

*Top right: Eskimos at Padlei Post with Sherman Oliver.*

*Rapids on the Maguse River which were run by Way and Oliver.*

which connects them, there existed at the time of the Cyril Knight expedition a Revillon Frères trading post, drawing its clientele not only from the ranks of the Caribou Eskimos to the north but also from the bands of subarctic Cree and Chipewyan Indians to the south. The post on Windy River was a meeting place of forest and tundra cultures and, consequently, the techniques of winter living and travel adopted by Harold Way and his companions were a mixture of Eskimo and Indian ingenuity. The men wore Eskimo fur parkas (kulitak) and trousers with Indian moosehide moccasins. They used Eskimo dogs and sleds (kamutiks) for most of their travel, but gave the smaller Indian, toboggan-type sled some use around the camp in soft snow conditions.

In his first letter home Way described how the men had established themselves in an abandoned Hudson Bay Company cabin near Windy Lake, about a mile from the Revillon Frères* post. Snow had remained on the ground through April, and after the men acquired sleds and dogs they had made several sled trips setting out food caches to support geological trips later by canoe.

By early June river ice had broken up, but ice jams were occurring frequently as lakes upstream released segments of their more persistent ice cover. While the men waited for the rivers to clear they assembled the two eighteen-foot "prefabricated" canoes. Supplied by the Peterborough Canoe Company, these canoes had been packed in sections under six feet in length for shipment by air. The keels and gunwales had to be assembled, and the ribs, conveniently numbered, were then secured to them with screws. Finally, canvas was stretched over the frames and painted.

The canoe trips began on 18 June. While McCart and Oliver worked southward Way and Stewart travelled north to Angikuni Lake, a voyage that took them 80 miles into the barren grounds and had them patiently collecting dwarf willow twigs in order to conserve naphtha fuel when they made tea. Both parties found geological work made easy by the frequency of rock outcrops but, on the other hand, the occurrence of rapids and falls in the rivers slowed their canoe progress. On one of their first trips the men portaged 21 times in 35 miles.

*In 1926 the H B C acquired a controlling interest in Revillon Frères Trading Company (the raw furs branch of the firm) and in 1936 they bought out that Company.

The procedure was to spend a few days at a campsite, prospect the surrounding country on foot, and then move on. After two weeks or so the prospecting teams would return to base camp, reorganize and set out again into a different area. In three months much of the fundamental geology was mapped within a radius of 100 to 150 miles.

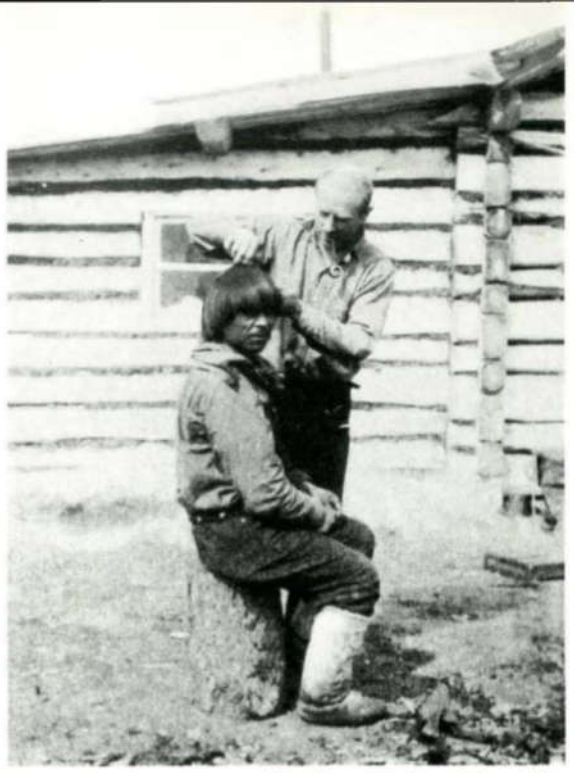
In the fall, preparations for the coming winter absorbed their energy. A wood stove would be burning from September to June to heat the cabin, and they estimated their fuel needs at 50 cords of wood. Hardly a tree existed near the cabin but a stream valley six miles away contained spruce trees of up to five inches in diameter. The men made dozens of trips to the valley, returning with kamutiks piled high with wood.

Another big task was to build up a stock of dog food. In order to achieve maximum mobility and flexibility the party had purchased four kamutiks and 27 dogs. Each man had his own team and sled. This was an extravagance which required strenuous efforts to obtain enough food. After freeze-up three gill-nets, each a hundred feet long, were set under the river ice. Every morning until January the nets were drawn up through holes in the ice, emptied of their catch, and re-set with the aid of long poles. It was a cold job but it resulted in a stock of over 6,000 fish—about 15 tons of dog food.

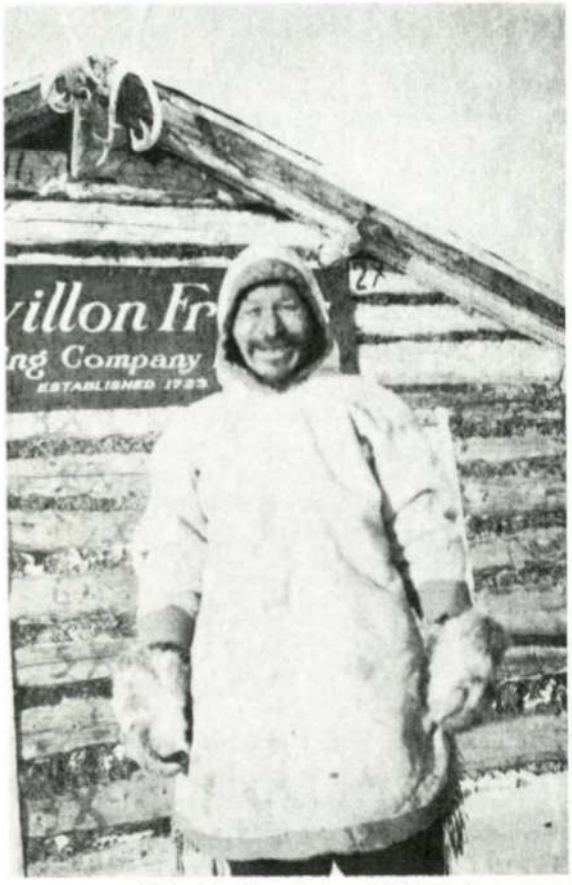
The fish were hung on short sticks to freeze and were then stored. On winter trips one fifty-pound stick of fish was considered daily rations for a team of five dogs, each dog consuming two fish or about ten pounds. Chopping the rock-hard frozen fish would create angular, knife-sharp pieces that might treat the interior of a dog unkindly when gulped down, so the fish were simply thrown whole to the dogs, who with some effort could gnaw them into manageable portions.

The only meat provided in the party's provisions was bacon, wrapped in foil containers, so caribou were hunted frequently. As early as 26 May the men had consumed about thirty caribou and many more had been cached under rocks for summer canoe trips. By the second week of July the ridges were thick with caribou migrating north to the tundra and in one day Way killed eighty-six. Wherever the men made a sizable kill they buried the carcasses securely under rocks. Most of the caches were within a day's journey of the cabin. A few, however, were more than 40 miles away.

The industry with which the men hunted during the summer paid off, for when the main caribou migration failed to appear in the fall, they had at least the consolation of about fifty carcasses stored for winter use. The Eskimos between Windy Lake and Padlei post were more seriously affected. Way wrote home, "The Eskimos



*Alec Stewart gives Igloopelli a hair cut at the winter camp.*




*Kakut in the winter of 1934-5, forty years after his journey with J. B. Tyrrell.*

are starving. Only one old man named Kakut has any meat . . . . Reports are that already they are doing away with most of their dogs." It was a taste of things to come. Within two decades the dramatic decline of the caribou resource upon which the inland Eskimo depended would bring about starvation on a larger scale and produce a population movement from the barren grounds to the Hudson Bay coast, with consequent problems of economic and social adjustment. *

Preparations for the winter kept the men active but they took well to the life. Way wrote home, "I never felt better in my life. I can run all day behind the dogs without puffing. My strength is becoming enormous—both in physique and odor".

Short days, poor light, snow cover, low temperatures and high winds reduced geological work to a minimum in the winter months. Day to day existence, however, required lots of effort and there was no time for boredom. Firewood had to be split and brought in. Water had to be obtained. Stone caches were visited every week for caribou meat. Traps set out to protect their meat caches frequently caught white fox and marten; these were thawed and skinned in the cabin, and the skins dried on frames. Two dozen dogs had to be fed each day. In addition to these chores a limited number of geological trips were made, as well as several trips to lay out caches for the proposed June canoe trip down the Maguse River.

Winter clothing had been made for the men by Eskimos trading at the Revillon Frères post. In addition to the inner and outer parkas and trousers of caribou fur the men had store-bought fur mittens, and Indian moosehide moccasins worn over duffle socks and several pairs of wool socks. On trips they carried a double-layer silk tent and Woods arctic sleeping robes with home-made, calfskin liners inside. Lunches on the trail usually included, bannock, honey, cheese and dried caribou meat, with a hot beverage. Small Primus stoves were used for cooking, but fuel was conserved where possible by making a wood fire.

The long Eskimo sled, or kamutik, was used on long trips and whenever heavy loads had to be carried. A half-inch layer of mud was frozen onto the runners at the beginning of the winter, and smoothed down with a wood plane, blade reversed. Before setting out on a voyage the mudded runners were iced by passing a moist bearskin along the entire length. The thin film of water froze instantly and the runners slid easily for ten miles or so, when the sled had to be turned over for another icing job. The men soon became proficient in sled-driving, and on occasion were able to cope with unforeseen setbacks. On one trip Way's dog team sniffed caribou as they were travelling along a ridge. They

* See Oswalt, W.H., "Caribou Eskimo Without Caribou," *The Beaver*, Spring, 1961.

*Igloopelli and his family.*

*Igloopelli's family at the camp near Windy River with Sherman Oliver.*

*Eskimos at Windy River, the post where Cree and Chipewyan Indians also traded.*

launched themselves into a frenzied rush downslope, which Way was unable to check. Unfortunately the slope was boulder strewn and the snow cover sparse, and when the rush was over one runner had lost four feet of its frozen mud base and the other runner slightly less. On a rocky arctic ridge in January the chances of finding some pliable black gumbo clay for mudding sled runners are few indeed, so Way boiled up a pot of oatmeal and plastered it on. It froze "smooth as ivory" and worked perfectly.

Poker games helped pass the time on long winter evenings. Dick Halcrow, the trading post manager, was a regular participant. Bullets were used as chips and vast mythical fortunes changed hands as the winter wore on. Whatever debts remained at the end of the poker season, however, were mercifully forgotten.

Once a week the men listened to the radio, and from time to time Eskimos or Cree Indians came in to sit in wonder as the sound box emitted its noise. After the battery died news was limited to what could be obtained from visitors, but these contacts were very few. Alf Petersen, the Hudson's Bay Company trader at Nueltin Lake post, came up only twice during the winter, and Glyn Abraham of the R.C.M.P. made one trip from Athabasca Lake to see whether the prospecting party was still alive. He came upon the camp so suddenly that Way, in panic lest he be discovered with furs on hand, stuffed his thirty-five marten skins into the stove. Six hundred dollars worth of furs blazed away cheerily as he welcomed the policeman.

Cree and Chipewyan Indians made occasional visits to the post, and Eskimos came more often, but they came singly or in small groups and remained no longer than necessary. The most frequent visitors were Kakut, an old Eskimo who as a boy in 1894 had accompanied J. B. Tyrrell on his second trip across the barren grounds and in 1926 was with Thierry Mallet on the Kazan (*The Beaver* March 1950), and Igloopelli and his family. Way came to admire the Eskimos strongly. They had "none of the veneer of falsity that we supposedly civilized people use so much", and were "in their ignorant and self-maintaining ways . . . the happiest people in the world". Despite the hardships which afflicted these natives when the caribou failed to return in the autumn, they appeared "richer in their own way than any white man ever hoped to be".

The main feature of the 1935 summer program was to be the canoe trip by Way and Oliver down the Maguse River to Hudson Bay, where their prospecting would tie in with coastal geology already mapped. Meanwhile McCart and Stewart would continue geological work in the Nueltin Lake area and go out by plane.

In June Way and Oliver left the Windy Lake camp. Despite cooking, washing up, collecting wood and water, sewing and many other necessary chores, Way had described it as a "haven of rest and contentment" where all the outside disturbing elements were absent. But after fourteen months they were looking forward to fresh scenery and the challenge of a tough trip.

The first part of the trip, and in many ways the most difficult, was an overland trek more than 120 miles northeastward to South Henik Lake. Although caches, including the canoe they would use on the Maguse River, had been set out during the winter to support this line of march, many streams and bogs lay athwart their course, and the going was hard. Approaching their destination, Way slipped and fell while crossing a field of huge, frost-shattered boulders. As he tried to throw off his back pack, the strain of his tumpline wrenched his head to one side and pulled a vertebra out of alignment, leaving his head cocked uncomfortably to one side for the remainder of the trip. Despite the discomfort, Way counted himself lucky. A more serious disability could easily have resulted.

South Henik Lake was still ice-covered when they reached it, and they faced the problem of getting their gear and canoe across. Help mysteriously arrived in the form of two stray Eskimo dogs, who were captured, put into makeshift harnesses, and hitched to the loaded canoe. After they had hauled it across the lake on rollers they were released. The canoe was floated, and the men started down-river for Padlei post.

The plan was to buy provisions at Padlei for the trip to Eskimo Point, but an unexpected difficulty arose. The post was temporarily closed. There was nothing to do but accelerate the journey to the coast, stretch their remaining provisions as far as possible, and obtain caribou and fish where they could. For greater confidence in manipulating rapids, more speed in quiet water, and greater security in the coastal voyage from the mouth of the Maguse River to Eskimo Point, they traded their eighteen-foot canoe plus $300 for a twenty-two foot freighter canoe and small outboard motor belonging to a Swedish trapper named Ralph Yandle. After three days at Padlei post Way and Oliver started down the Maguse.

From Padlei to the coast is about a hundred miles as the crow flies, but the twists of the Maguse River add appreciably to this distance. From an elevation of about 600 feet the river descends to sea level with many rapids and sections of swift water. In some parts, however, it winds slowly through long lakes. The entire distance is across tundra.

Short of food and ammunition, Way and Oliver were anxious to get to Eskimo Point with little delay, and so

they ran almost all the rapids in their loaded canoe. They would land at each rapid and walk down the bank to plot a course through. Occasionally the canoe had to be lined or poled cautiously through a difficult section. A few times it was moved on rollers around a river obstacle. Once it was unloaded and lowered over a vertical drop of eight feet. At all other times the rapids were run, with many moments of thrill and danger.

Despite the need for haste the men took time to note the geology along the river and to make some walking traverses several miles back from it. And there was time for tea and conversation when they met small groups of Eskimos travelling inland from the coast.

At Maguse Lake, with over fifty miles to go to the coast, Way used his last 30-30 bullet to bring down a caribou, but in a few days they reached the mouth of the Maguse River and saw the waters of Hudson Bay stretching to the horizon.

In order to reach their destination at Eskimo Point they faced an additional voyage of forty miles along a low, exposed coast which offered no protection to small boats. Indeed a gale caught them on the first part of the journey. They took refuge on a small island which was so low that storm waves threatened to sweep them off. After a tense and sleepless night the storm abated and they pressed on, arriving at the Eskimo Point trading post with enough food for a bannock and a cup of tea, but nothing more.

The canoe trip was over. Without the benefit of guides Harold Way and Sherman Oliver had crossed an unmapped section of the barren grounds to Hudson Bay, and despite food shortage had completed their geological work. The voyage brought to a close the prospecting venture of the Cyril Knight interests. Although no spectacular mineral discoveries had been made, the work of the four men during eighteen months on the fringe of the Arctic had added significantly to the spotty knowledge of northern geology. ◆

*Anana and girl at Padlei post in 1934 when conditions were bad.*

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY DR HAROLD WAY

*The travelling outfit with dogteam, sled, and canoe.*

By R. J. Brunt

# CHARMAINE

FROM THE TIME I LANDED at the Weather Station, in the high Arctic, 2000 miles and more north of Edmonton, Alberta, I heard about Charmaine. It had started as the crew-chief of the big R.C.A.F. transport plane handed down my luggage and waved a cheerful farewell. "See you in the spring," he called. "Don't let Charmaine eat you up!"

"OK," I replied, as I zipped my parka snug against the breath-taking, below-zero chill. "Don't be late!" and I thought to myself that this Charmaine creature, whoever or whatever she might be, would bear watching.

Then one evening during supper someone remarked casually, "I see Charmaine is back."

"Yep, that will make the dogs happy," was the reply, so I took the opportunity to find out about Charmaine.

"Oh, that's our pet wolf," said Pete, the Met Officer, "you'll see her around."

"Tame?" I ventured.

"Oh sure," he said, and in the face of this casual acceptance I let the matter drop. Just how a long-legged, gaunt she-wolf rated a name like Charmaine, I never did find out. My first encounter with her came as a complete surprise.

I had been out watching our half-dozen station huskies sham-fighting with each other in the snow when a grey-white ghost of a beast rose up out of a mound almost beside me and shook the powder-snow out of her fur. This was no dog, that was perfectly obvious, therefore it must be a wolf: Charmaine!

Taking heart from what I had heard, and from the fact that the dogs completely ignored her, I stood my ground and frankly stared at her with as much interest as she was staring at me.

"Charmaine?" I called, "here girl!" and I reached into the sidepocket of my parka to toss her a piece of chocolate and right then and there Charmaine vanished. Right before my eyes she disappeared! I blinked and looked away and then looked back—and there she was: I don't think she had moved an inch! I took a step towards her and again she vanished: just disappeared! There had been no movement, not a flicker, but one instant there had been a wolf and the next, no wolf.

Intrigued, I took a step back, determined to wait and see what happened next. There was the faintest suggestion of movement in front of me, and there she was again. I began to get some idea of how the trick had been pulled: her silver-white fur blended perfectly into the snow background in the arctic twilight and by some trick of muscle control she had been able to shroud her piercing black eyes and hide her black nose: it was just a case of the "black cat in the coal-bin"—only in reverse.

I stared at her, and she stared right back at me. If I moved suddenly she disappeared: if I stepped back and stood perfectly still she reappeared: on again, off again. "Just like a neon sign," I thought, and laughed aloud at the absurdity of the notion.

Startled at the sound of my voice she danced away with mincing steps, never taking her eyes off my face, and then (perhaps perturbed at my lack of manners and obviously caring not at all for chocolate) she trotted off to join the dogs.

I never did find out whether the other wolves (there were seven or eight who used to hang around our garbage dump) had Charmaine's trick of disappearing, as she was the only one our huskies would allow into camp. But it used to afford us much amusement, that and her insatiable curiosity about all things man-made.

It was impossible to tell how old Charmaine was: even the oldest hands at the Weather Station remembered being told about her by their predecessors; indeed it seemed that she had "always" been there. But by the way she moved, light-footed and quick, it seemed that she must be young, as wolves go. She was all white except for her great black eyes and glistening snout. Her thick pelt, unkempt and woolly, looked slept-in and was in sharp contrast to the rich fur of our station huskies, but still she was strangely appealing.

Charmaine was neither friendly nor hostile: she was just remote. She would permit a man to approach within a few feet, almost within touching distance, and then would dance away, nimble-footed and wary-eyed: curious but always cautious. Occasionally she would disappear for days at a time down into the tumbled ice-pack below the station with the rest of the wolves, and our dogs would station themselves at various vantage points, watching for her to return. They knew enough not to venture into that trap where, in the wolves own territory, they would stand little chance in a pitched battle. But eventually, and in her own good time, Charmaine would return and she would wait, crouched down in the snow, until Old Mike (our oldest husky) would go up to her and rub his muzzle against her in a tender gesture of friendship and acceptance, and only then would she raise herself on her long, slender legs and meekly follow him back into

camp, the other dogs strung out behind in a sort of triumphal procession.

But sometimes the rest of the wolf-pack would be close behind and other times they were already in ambush and then the snow would be churned up in a red-tinged whirlwind as fang and claw were pitted against claw and fang until finally the wolves, vanquished by the superior weight and strength of our dogs, would retreat into their own icebound world. Charmaine would take no part in these fights: she would watch, unconcerned and unmoved, as the battle raged around her. The cynics said this was because she couldn't make up her feminine mind which side she was on, but I believe that by this time she belonged to neither world: neither ours nor theirs.

Charmaine, you see, was a kept woman. She had made up her mind, long since, that the pickings at the cook-house door were infinitely better and easier to come by than were the lemmings and arctic hare which should have formed her staple diet. Besides, as some people are driven to excesses over peanuts or candy, Charmaine was an addict to a certain canned-meat product. She would accept gratefully (if suspiciously) meat bones or left-over soup, but over a slice or two of canned meat she would drool and slaver in an ecstasy of anticipation and would almost—but not quite—permit someone to touch her for such a reward.

Charmaine was insatiably curious: a pair of skiis leaning against a building would bring her, out of nowhere it seemed, to inspect them. If someone ventured outdoors in the bitter weather there would be Charmaine to follow him: near enough to inspect what he might do and far enough away to be safe if he should turn suddenly.

I was repairing our outdoor snowshoe rack one day (and not doing a very good job of it, I admit, in the half-light and biting cold) when I noticed Charmaine watching me. "What's the matter, old girl," I called, "isn't it plumb?"

But Charmaine could see very well that it wasn't plumb and she flashed me a look of disapproval before doing her famous disappearing act, so I fixed the rack properly: just for her!

It became quite a joke around the station that if we built something or repaired something it had to be "good enough for Charmaine" and while our efforts never seemed to be quite good enough to earn a "well done" from her, perhaps our station was in better shape than many because of her.

One of our station projects involved the building of a considerable scaffolding out of heavy planks and for days we had been struggling to lift and nail these into position when the Met Officer warned us that we were going to have a big storm.

"Tie everything down tight, boys," he warned, "this could be a bad one!" With only hours to go before the storm, there was no prospect of finishing our scaffolding: it was just a matter of trying to make sure the planks were all securely fastened and then to hope for the best.

About midnight the first gusts hit us: the anemometer began to turn faster and faster: thirty—fifty—eighty-five knots and still the wind kept increasing. Occasionally there would be a momentary lull and then it would attack again with renewed ferocity and the buildings would shake and tremble under the tremendous buffets. At times, Pete told us, the wind would peak at an even hundred miles an hour. We were safe enough, he said, as long as nothing gave way under the tremendous pressure. But scarcely had he finished speaking when we heard a grinding crash and the clatter of falling planks and then some ominously solid "thumps" as the wind picked up boards as if they had been match-sticks and slammed them against our building.

"It's the scaffolding," someone shouted, "it's gone!"

We ran to the windows and tried to peer out between the slats of the storm-shutters but it was hopeless. It was just a seething maelstrom of whirling, screaming snow out there and we ducked back as a wind-driven plank hit our building with a solid "whack". There was nothing to do but wait. It seemed a long night. Several times we thought that parts of the scaffolding would come right through the walls, but as the wind subsided and we realized that the storm was over, we could hardly wait to get outside to inspect the damage.

The scaffolding was gone completely (some of the planks we never did find) but aside from that there was very little damage—even my snow-shoe rack was intact on the wall. The huskies appeared one at a time from their own hideaways, glad to see us and eager to assist us to scrabble in the tight-packed snow for the missing planks.

Suddenly Old Mike raised his muzzle to the sky and howled. To our surprise all the dogs immediately left us and raced over to where he stood. We looked around to see if there were wolves near us but nothing moved against the snow. Mike howled again and we too went over to where he stood trembling.

There, half-buried in the snow, was Charmaine: quite dead. A wind-driven plank had broken her back, killing her instantly, and perhaps it wasn't just the aching cold which caused us to rub our eyes with our fur-backed mittens as we saw first one dog then another go up to the pitiful corpse, sniff once and then turn away. The little lady wolf was dead—killed by her own curiosity and by our workmanship, which for once, hadn't been "good enough for Charmaine". ◆

# NORTHERN BOOKS

## QUEBEC: THE REVOLUTIONARY AGE 1760-1791

By Hilda Neatby. McClelland and Stewart, Toronto: 1966. xii, 300 pages. $8.50.

*Reviewed by Donald Swainson*

Dr Neatby's book is Volume VI in *The Canadian Centenary Series*, under the general editorship of W. L. Morton and D. G. Creighton. Her contribution, like the majority of those already published, is essentially a work of synthesis. This is proper, for *The Canadian Centenary Series* is not only a multi-volume, co-operative history of Canada but also a critical summary of the now massive quantity of published material on our history. Each volume, while a separate work, conforms to certain general standards — especially in such areas as length and depth of coverage. The series is designed for the informed and interested general reader as well as for the specialist.

The period covered by Miss Neatby's volume, 1760-91, is crucial and fascinating. During those three decades several events and decisions altered the course of Canadian development in the most fundamental of ways: the cession occurred; what is now Canada ceased to be primarily a French speaking land; our eastern borders were for the most part delineated; we decided not to join the United States of America; and, representative institutions were granted to Upper and Lower Canada. These decisions were so important that one can argue that since 1791 Canadians have really done little more than verify, amplify, and footnote them. If any age was crucial and transitional it was "The Revolutionary Age," and Hilda Neatby is ideally suited to discuss it. She was a student of A. L. Burt, the great master of late eighteenth century studies, and for a generation she has studied and discussed the period.

The problems and personalities discussed by Miss Neatby are old friends to students of Canadian history. With insight and clarity she analyses the post-conquest church, British policy, key personalities of the era, the Quebec Act, the Constitutional Act, the politics of the province, the impact of a revolutionary world on a traditional society, economic development and the customs and manners of the conquered Canadians. Most judgements are both acute and perceptive. About Sir Guy Carleton, Professor Neatby comments: "With all his ability it was his weakness that he saw in himself more of the insight of genius than he really possessed" (p. 87). The administrative techniques of Carleton and Haldimand, collectively called "The System of the Generals," is explained: "Carleton and Haldimand together contrived so to interpret the Quebec Act as to make it the instrument of a dictatorship not exactly approved, but tolerated by the home government" (p. 171).

The sections concerned with economic development are weaker than the others, but the discussion of society and manners (entitled "The Darkest Corner of the Dominion") is perhaps the best. Here we find an intriguing discussion of such topics as fun, marriage, clubs, education, the poor, class, food and the daily life of the people. The loyalists receive surprisingly little attention. G. M. Craig gives them an excellent treatment in *Upper Canada: The formative Years* (Volume VII of *The Canadian Centenary Series*), which may explain why they receive little attention from Professor Neatby. Each volume however is supposed to stand alone, and the loyalists are too important to the Old Province of Quebec to be passed over quickly. The bibliography is useful, but could be far more extensive. The second edition (1945) of W. S. Wallace's pioneering *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* is listed. A third (revised) edition was published in 1963. The illustrations are tasteful and enrich the volume.

*Quebec: The Revolutionary Age* adds much to our knowledge of the years after the Conquest, and synthesizes much recent scholarship. It is a useful book, and one of the best volumes in *The Canadian Centenary Series*.

*Mr Swainson is assistant professor of history at Queen's University.*

## MEN AND MERIDIANS

### The History of Surveying and Mapping in Canada.

By Don W. Thomson. Vol I, Prior to 1867; 345 pages, 90 maps, diagrams, photos. Vol.II, 1867-1917, 342 pages, 156 maps, diagrams, photos. Queen's Printer, Ottawa, 1967. $8.00 per volume.

*Reviewed by R. I. Ruggles*

A number of institutions and societies have taken the opportunity afforded by the Canadian Centennial to take stock of their present position and to display their accomplishments. Few have such a long story to relate, or a history which details so much of the fabric of the nation, its struggles, and its magnificent achievements, as the surveyors and mappers of this country. The Department of Mines and Technical Surveys of Canada (now the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources), and the Institute of Chartered Surveyors had the felicitous idea of inviting Mr Don Thomson to undertake the massive assignment of writing a three volume description of the surveying and mapping of Canada from early times to the present. The first two volumes relate the story to 1917, and a third volume will review modern developments in the last half century.

Although the author is neither a surveyor nor a cartographer, but a lawyer and writer, he has had a lengthy association with the subject matter as private secretary to the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys, and information officer with the Resources for Tomorrow Secretariat. In his research he has received also the co-operation of provincial ministries and surveyors' associations, as well as a large cadre of specialists and knowledgeable persons. He has found the accumulated records of government and archival collections to be a rich mine of information and illustration, into which he has dug assiduously.

The first decision which had to be made was that concerning the central theme of the study; would men and organizations be pivotal, or would it be maps. In other words, would it be a history of the institutions and the men who surveyed and mapped the country, or would it be an analysis of the maps produced by men and organizations. As the title of the series accurately denotes, the decision was that it would be a history of men, mapping. And this is as it should be, as the desire was to describe the part played by surveying and mapping organizations, and in particular, the two sponsoring groups, in the development and delineation of Canada.

The task accepted by Mr Thomson was an exceedingly arduous and complex one, for the many strands could easily become entangled and its history confusing. The structure decided upon by the author for the trilogy is a natural one for the wealth and type of material to be presented. The temporal dimension prevails; the first book outlines the pre-Confeder-

ation story, and the succeeding ones split Canada's century into two half-century tomes, the pre-World War I era, and the post-war modern period. It is expected that the final study will soon be available, although the tale it tells is better known to most readers than that of the volumes under review. Within each book the maintenance of cohesion is a difficult problem. The first volume is more successful than the second in this regard.

In summary, the first book is divided into three sections: five chapters on the development of cartography in Europe, which give the background to the discussion of the next five chapters on the surveying and mapping of New France, and thirdly, nine chapters on the accomplishments of British and Canadian mappers up to the time of Confederation. Volume 2 is not as happily integrated, but five main threads are interwoven: the surveying and mapping of the Canadian West, the Yukon and the Arctic; international and provincial boundary demarcation; surveys and maps of the C.P.R. and other railway companies; the development of and work accomplished by burgeoning federal agencies, geological, geodetic, hydrographic, astronomic, and military; and mapping methods and thematic maps produced before 1917.

There are several organizational aspects to which some exception can be taken. One of these is the inclusion of five chapters, amounting to 34 pages on the history of Cartography. It would seem more appropriate to have presented three or four of the very early critical maps as a background to mapping during the French period, and to have expended the remaining pages on two aspects which deserve more attention, the maps of the French period itself, and British maps in the western and northern regions both before and after the Conquest. Furthermore, these general chapters interrupt the skilful relationship which Mr Thomson develops by means of an introductory essay on Louisbourg between the past French period and the future British period of surveys and mapping.

The second organizational problem which presents some perplexity to the reader is the course charted for the second volume. In actuality, the five main threads outlined previously are rather more intertangled than their enumeration would indicate, and to some degree it is difficult for the reader to maintain cohesion. Each segment is comprehensive and comprehensible, but their placement seems to have no particular coherence for the story as a whole.

Both volumes are profusely illustrated with reproductions of original historical maps, explanatory maps, photos and diagrams. The end papers are copies of original maps, and also included are a dozen two-page colour facsimiles of maps, and seven historic paintings in colour, the latter courtesy of the Confederation Life of Canada.

Most of the reproduction of maps and photos is very clear, but two aspects elicit some discussion. The special colour copies of historic maps are not too effective. For example, the portion of Sir William Logan's Geological Map of Canada, 1866, is virtually unreadable nor is E. D. Ingall's Geological Map of Part of Silver Mountain, 1887, much more successful. It is unfortunate that superior photography and printing could not have been forthcoming from the chief map printing agency of the nation.

Finally, it is not clear what reasoning lay behind the choice of end-paper maps. If they are meant to represent the state of cartography or the cartographic depiction of the knowledge of the country at the commencement and end periods encompassed in each volume, only the frontispiece map of 1867 in volume two, corroborates this theory. The Bellin, 1755, frontispiece map in volume one does not illustrate well either the best French cartography at that period nor the state of French knowledge of this country then. The J. Arrowsmith map, on the back cover of volume one, is of 1834, although there are better maps to depict Canada by the mid-nineteenth century. The final map of volume two is of the year 1872, not of the period of the First World War.

An affluence of detail is available in this series, particularly concerning significant men and the agencies instituted to record and to delineate the territory of Canada. The author has made his narrative vital, and personalities human, rather than biographic entries in the dull pages of government documents. Far-sighted and gifted public servants have been numerous among the founding personnel of our national and provincial surveying and mapping agencies. Indeed, the chapters concerned with these aspects of growth are among the most successful of the various segments of this study. Mr Thomson is especially effective in his handling of the plethora of detail on the day-to-day operations and the intricacies of management of these projects. He is able to portray vividly not only the dangers and tribulations of terrain, weather and wild animals faced by these men, but also the dogged and sometimes herculean efforts involved in cutting brush, laying lines, and recording measurements.

All persons interested in our nation's history, its geographic evaluation and delineation, and in the outstanding achievements in national surveys and maps will find in this epic study a fascinating documentary, and academics concerned with cartographic education will become dependent upon it as an absolutely essential reference library. The third expected volume can only enhance and strengthen this assessment.

*Professor Ruggles is head of the Department of Geography at Queen's University.*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### THE HONOURABLE COMPANY

**A History of the Hudson's Bay Company**

By Douglas MacKay. McClelland & Stewart, 383 pages, maps. Paperback, obtainable from Hudson's Bay House, 79 Main Street, Winnipeg 1, Manitoba. $1.00.

The history of this oldest chartered trading company in the world is a long and complex one through which are interwoven the threads of adventure, trade, and politics, clashes between nations, and the exploits of colourful men. The story was put together and related in lively narrative form by Douglas MacKay, then editor of *The Beaver*, and first published in 1936. Mr MacKay discarded footnotes in the interest of readability and approached the subject objectively, to the point of permitting criticism of the Honourable Company. Since his aim was not to produce a definitive history, which

would necessarily run to several volumes, his stress was on men and events rather than markets and business methods. This choice is agreeable to the general reader, and the historian can turn to the later volumes of Professor E. E. Rich's *Hudson's Bay Company 1670-1870*.

A revised edition was published by Mrs MacKay in 1949, after her husband's death, but the book has been out of print for some years. In the present paperback edition, minor changes in the final chapter dealing with this century have been made by Shane MacKay and some of the appendices have been omitted. There are plenty of good stories in this book which is recommended to those who rightly feel that the presentation of history should be entertaining, and a selected bibliography points the way to further reading. —*M.B.*

### FROZEN SHIPS

**The Arctic Diary of Johann Miertsching 1850-1854**

Translated and with notes by L. H. Neatby. Macmillan of Canada, Toronto. 1967. 254 pages, illus., maps. $6.50.

*Reviewed by Flora Hamilton Burns*

*Frozen ships* is the personal diary of Johann August Miertsching, a young German member of the Moravian Brotherhood who was very proficient in the Eskimo language (which he acquired in Labrador) and was engaged as interpreter for the search for Sir John Franklin via Bering Strait. He was assigned to H.M.S. *Investigator*, commanded by Captain Robert L. McClure, which became ice-bound in Prince of Wales Strait in 1850. Freed the following summer, she circumnavigated Banks Island and discovered two Northwest Passages. Again beset, she was never released but in 1853 her crew was rescued by a sledge party from H.M.S. *Resolute*.

Miertsching and the officers were forced to leave their journals on the ship, but with the aid of his many pencilled notes, his vivid memory and the captain's diary Miertsching immediately rewrote his journal. It has remained in the hands of his descendants, unpublished, until recently made available by the family to Dr L. H. Neatby, then Head of the Classics Department, Acadia University, and author of "*In Quest of the North West Passage*. Dr Neatby has produced a most skilful and engaging translation, and his introduction, notes, and summaries of the other Search Expeditions add greatly to this new and valuable accession to the Saga of the Franklin Search and the discovery of the Northwest Passage. Except for Dr Armstrong's formal, rather ponderous narrative, Miertsching's diary is the only first hand account of the *Investigator's* controversial voyage. It reveals aspects passed over by Dr Armstrong, relates fresh episodes, and sheds unique sidelights on the ambiguous character of Captain McClure, which add great interest but do not solve the enigma of his personality.

Free from the professional reserve of a naval officer, and seen through the eyes of a straightforward, sensitive and unselfish individual who adjusted himself in a remarkable fashion to the hardships of "three years lost in the ice", Miertsching's record has a freshness and directness of approach which makes his very human journal a moving document. Its style is graphic and completely individual, with touches of unconscious humour and amusing glimpses of daily life, such as "Captain Kellett sent his dog-sledge to the hunting tent to fetch me to resole two pairs of boots for him."

*Frozen ships* is not only a nautical record but reveals the development of Miertsching's own character. Unprepared for the rough ways of British seamen under inexperienced officers and a harsh captain, the celebrations when crossing the equator shocked Miertsching: "It is truly more than any Christian man can comprehend that such men as our sailors should exist! I feel as if my lot had been cast among half a hundred devils."

His warm hearted, generous nature overcame the narrow outlook of his early training and he learned to appreciate the fine qualities of the sailors faced with the terrible hazards of the polar ice. When rescue arrived Miertsching had become the best loved and one of the most efficient members of the ship's company—staunch, unflagging, a seasoned hunter; diplomatic and understanding, never obtruding his strong religious views on others unsought, and the only person with whom Captain McClure felt happy and at ease. One feels his unassuming influence was a factor in the "exceptional good conduct" of the *Investigator's* men.

On Melville Island, en route to the rescue ships, he wrote: "Today . . . I could not refrain from going on shore, and, exhausted as I was, climbing a low hill. There I stood on Melville Island, and, all starved and wretched as I was, could not suppress the proud thought that here in this polar region I was the only Wend from Germany, and that I had had a share in the Northwest Passage, sought for 300 years, and now discovered by us."

*Miss Burns is a freelance writer who has made a special study of the maritime history of the northwest.*


**ESKIMO ART**

This popular presentation of many aspects of Eskimo carving, old and recent, pottery, painting, masks, with a selected bibliography, which was a s pecial issue of The Beaver in 1967, has now been reprinted. 100 pages of text and pictures.

$1.50 from

The Beaver, Hudson's Bay House
Winnipeg 1, Manitoba


### ARCTIC BIBLIOGRAPHY VOLUME 13

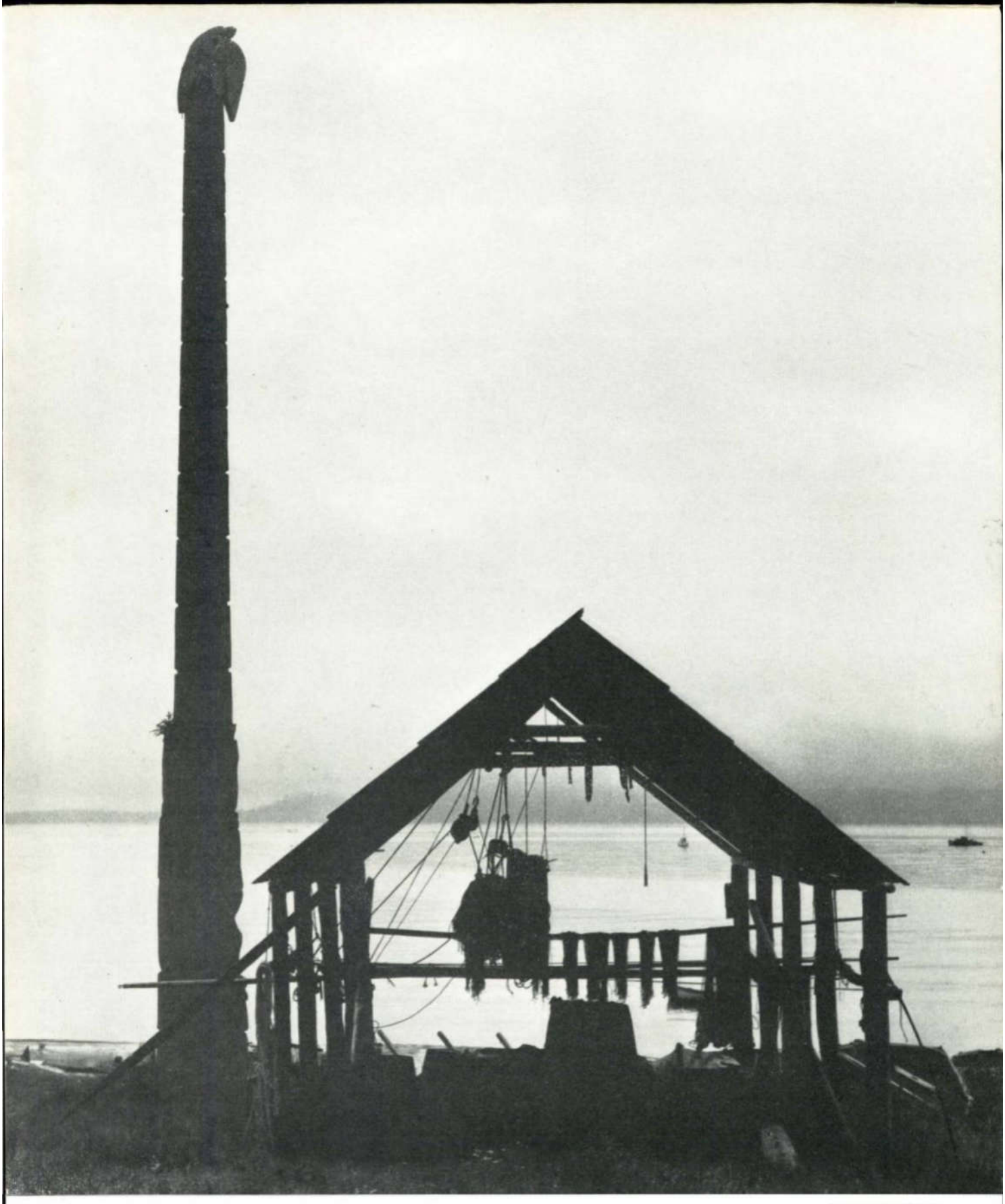
McGill University Press, Montreal, 1967, 1554 pages. $12.50.

The first three volumes of this bibliography were published in 1953 after six years work by the Arctic Institute of North America, for the United States Department of Defense. The objective was "to meet the requirements for a key to existing knowledge of the Arctic and to serve as a fundamental research tool." Those first volumes covered some twenty thousand publications, from early times to 1950, in many European languages and Japanese, and the subject-geographic index (Vol. 3) carried some 100,000 entries. Currently Russian and English predominate. The brief descriptive résumés, are an invaluable guide for any serious study of the Arctic.

This vast task of systematizing, abstracting, and indexing the huge quantity of world scientific literature on the Arctic and Subarctic has been under the skilled direction of Marie Tremaine, and it is a magnificent achievement.

The first twelve volumes were printed and distributed in Washington. Now, with the continuing support of United States and Canadian governments, Volume XIII is printed and distributed in Montreal.

The 8,011 abstracts in this volume bring the total number of publications abstracted and indexed to 84,737. Future coverage will be extended somewhat south of the area that has hitherto been covered. —*M.B.*



RICHARD HARRINGTON

*Old Haida house and totem pole topped by eagle overlooking Skidegate Inlet, Queen Charlotte Islands, twenty years ago.*

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